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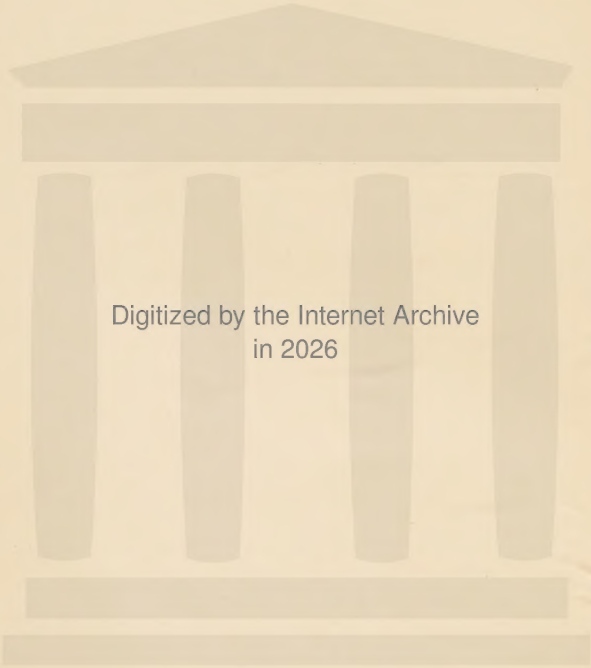

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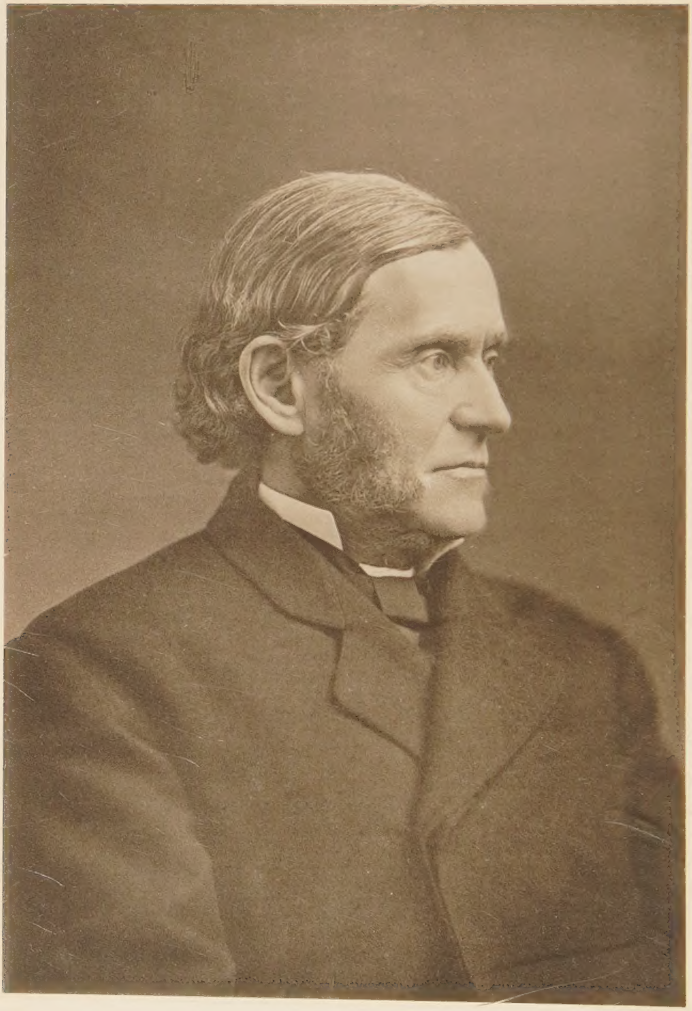

Roswell D. Hitchcock

ETERNAL ATONEMENT

BY

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PREFACE

A few years since, Dr. Hitchcock destroyed the greater portion of his manuscripts. Of his sermons he preserved only about thirty, from which the following are selected as showing the truths on which he loved to dwell, and which were the foundation of his own religious life. He was not bound by any rigid system which cramped and fettered his mind. His intellect was so original and powerful that it could not be confined; and the store of knowledge which it absorbed, instead of being so much dead learning, only fed and stimulated its activity. He was always making new acquisitions. But the effect was not to weaken his faith. On the contrary, as his mental horizon enlarged, and he could see farther, his convictions grew stronger. Especially was this the result of his studies in Church history. In his philosophy Christ was the Centre round which all history revolved, from which he took the bearing of every point in the mighty orbit of religious truth. With a mind like his, knowledge was the parent of wisdom and of strength. Amid the

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fluctuations of modern opinion he was tranquil and composed, because he had found one Divine Life running through the ages, and knew that He who had always been with His Church, would abide with it unto the end of the world. This faith so serene, resting on a conviction so profound, may be traced distinctly through these sermons, which thus arrange themselves in a natural order, that it did not seem wise to disturb by the insertion of others equally strong, but not so directly in this line of thought.

Dr. Hitchcock published little in his life-time. His mind was so active, and he was so constantly giving out fresh thoughts to stimulate others, that he left himself little space to revise and elaborate for the press. Besides, his power was in himself quite as much as in his words. His own personality was so marked, that his presence in the pulpit or the lecture-room, at once commanded attention, and gave emphasis to what he uttered. That personal magnetism cannot be recalled: though it remains to all who knew him a most vivid and precious memory. But now that he is gone, we can only read these silent pages, supplying, as best we may, the flashing eye and the thrilling voice.

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I

ETERNAL ATONEMENT

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ETERNAL ATONEMENT

"And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship Him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."—REVELATION xiii. 8; PSALM lxxii.

My subject is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. My text is Rev. xiii. 8, the precise import of which is disputed; and I will therefore give you the rival renderings. As we have been used to it in the Authorized Version, it reads: "Written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." The Anglican Revisers, following the lead of Alford, make no essential change: "Written in the book of life of the Lamb that hath been slain from the foundation of the world." The American Revisers, following the lead of Bengel, De Wette, and many others, would have it: "Written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that hath been slain." The American rendering makes the election eternal. The Anglican rendering makes the atonement eternal.

The prevalent opinion no doubt has been that the atonement is simply an historic fact, dating back now some nineteen hundred years; and that only the purpose of it is eternal. But Johann Wessel, the great German theologian, who died only six years after Mar-

tin Luther was born, got hold of the idea that not election only, but atonement also, is an eternal act. And this, it seems to me, is both rational and scriptural. Eternal election, profoundly considered, requires eternal atonement for its support. Both are eternal, as all Divine realities are eternal. If the passage in Revelation were given up, we should still have to deal with 1 Peter i. 19, 20, where the Lamb is spoken of as foreknown before the foundation of the world, but manifested at the end of the times; eternal reality becoming temporal fact. We should still have to deal with John xvii. 24, which also carries back into eternity the redeeming relationship between the Father and the Son. Even on Calvary, as temporal actuality, the Lamb slain is only a figure of speech, and, of course, it can be no more than a figure of speech as eternal reality in the bosom of God. But whether in time, or in eternity—whether on Calvary or in the bosom of God, the figure must stand for something. For us the meaning is, and must be, that not election only, but atonement also, is eternal. And so the relationship of God to moral evil stands forth as an eternal relationship. Not that evil is itself eternal; but God always knew it and always felt it. It may help our thinking in this direction to remember that there is a sense in which creation itself is eternal; not independently eternal, but, of God's will, dependently eternal.

There must nothing be said, or thought, in mitigation of the ethical verdict against moral evil. The hatefulness of it, no matter what its chronology may be, is simply unspeakable. Violated law is monstrous. Unmindfulness of God, who has always been so mind-

ful of us, is mean. Never to pray, either in one's closet or in one's family, is against all the proprieties. Idolatry is childish and contemptible. Profaneness of speech is scandalous. Neglect of holy time is robbery. Disobedience to parents is shameful. Murder is hideous. Unchastity murders the soul, is indeed both murder and suicide. And so of all the rest. Theft, falsehood, and even inordinate desire are abominable. Imagine a community, larger or smaller—a family, a township, a state, or a nation, where the Ten Commandments are persistently trampled under foot, and you will have imagined a community intolerable even to itself. And if this be our human judgment, what must the Divine judgment be? The more pure and righteous a moral being is, the more squarely he must antagonize, the more intensely he must hate, the more surely he must punish impurity and unrighteousness. Volcanic fire inside the globe, forked lightning outside of it, are faint emblems of holy wrath. Wrong doing is the one thing nowhere, and never, to be either condoned or endured. Physical accident, bodily sickness, financial disaster, social bereavement, may all be pitied. But when a thoroughly bad man stands revealed, only lightning is logical. He that sows the wind ought to reap the whirlwind. It was a great philosopher who stood amazed at the starry sky, and at the moral sense in man. Well he might. There is no softness in the midnight sky; only cold blue marble, and a steady blaze that never relents, and is never tired. You cannot endure that blaze, you dare not risk yourself out alone among those gleaming orbs with a guilty secret in your bosom. The universe is instinct with law that

never abdicates. Remorse is not repentance; and even repentance washes out no stain. Self-forgiveness is impossible. The trumpet is always sounding; every day is a judgment-day; and every one of us goes to the left. Gehenna is only the logical goal of sin.

Nor should any attempt be made to get at the genesis of moral evil. The beginning of it is simply inconceivable. The whole thing is a mystery, and must be let alone. Moral evil is not eternal; or there would be two infinities. Nor is it a creature of God; or God would be divided against Himself. And yet it had the Divine permission, whatever that may be imagined to have been. With every attribute roused and alert—infinity of power, infinity of wisdom, infinity of holiness, God stood by and let evil enter. Angels revolted first, somewhere among the stars. Mankind revolted. Was evil really unavoidable in a proper moral system? If so, immorality is not immoral. Evil that is really essential to good should not be considered evil. It would be only the bitter bud of the fragrant blossom and the luscious fruit. Or, putting it in another form, will you say that God could not have prevented evil? He certainly could have prevented it. In Heaven to-day, what is the security of saints and angels, of your own dear sainted mother, of Gabriel himself, but God's own grace, constraining the will of every saint, constraining the will of every seraph? What is human sin but the abuse of human appetites, of human passions, of human faculties, in themselves all innocent? Study the lesson of our Lord's temptation in the desert. Certainly, He was not tempted as we are, by inflamed appetites and

passions, by impaired and disordered faculties. But He possessed all these natural appetites, passions, and faculties; and they were put to a real and a tremendous strain. That "great duel," as Milton calls it, was no sham fight; one or the other had to go down. Christ was gnawed by hunger, but refused to eat. He saw what might be done by a brilliant miracle towards inaugurating His Jewish ministry, but refused to work it. He saw the short, Satanic path to Messianic dominion, but chose Gethsemane and Calvary. Now the first Adam was just as cool and just as innocent as the second Adam. And, with more of grace to strengthen him, he too might have stood. There was no real necessity for that first human disobedience. It was sheer, wanton, gratuitous, inexplicable apostasy. Somewhat more of Divine constraint, and the catastrophe would certainly have been averted. Call it non-prevention, call it permission, call it anything you please, somehow sin entered in spite of God's hating it. It came knocking for admission, and God's shoulder was not against the gate. For some reason, or reasons, not revealed, perhaps not revealable, God thought it best not to put His shoulder against the gate. The hateful and hated thing pushed through. Ormuzd let in Ahriman. I thank the Persian for these two words. They embody and emphasize the historic dualism of good and evil. The *historic* dualism, you will observe I say; there is no other dualism. God is One; and master of all. The Divine permission of hateful and hated evil, when we fairly apprehend it, is a tremendous statement, which might well be challenged, were not the thing itself so undeniably a fact. This is as far as we can go. Here

we halt, with our bruised and throbbing foreheads hard up against the granite cliff.

Practically, historic sin finds relief in historic redemption. Apparently, there was little, if any, interval between the two. Sin came, perhaps, with the noontide rest. "In the cool of the day"—that same day, most likely, the offended Lord came walking in the garden. The colloquy had a sharp beginning, but a mellow ending. The bitten heel would finally crush the biting head. And the struggle at once began. The Lord came down very close to His erring, guilty, frightened children. And they clung very closely to Him. We are in great danger of underrating that primitive economy of grace. The record is very brief, and the oriental genius of it seems strange to us. But we see an altar there; and it can have had but one meaning. Ages after, in all the nobler ethnic religions—Egyptian, Indian, Persian, and Pelasgic, we encounter echoes and survivals of that first vouchsafement of revelation. In all the great religions, we find one God; in all of them, personal immortality, with retribution; in most of them, Divine Triads; in two of them at least, the resurrection of the body. If it be true, as we may well believe, that Socrates is now in Heaven, singing the new song, it is because he sacrificed; and he sacrificed, whether he fully understood it or not, because of that colloquy in the garden. And if that sufficed for him, the Providence of God is justified. Historic sin is fairly matched, and overmatched, by historic redemption.

But the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, suggests a far sublimer theodicy. We are taken

back behind the human ages, behind all time, into awful infinite depths, into the very bosom of the Triune God. Theological science recognizes two Trinities, which it calls economic and essential. The former began with historic redemption, and kept pace with it. Father, Son, and Spirit stood for law, redemption, and regeneration. It was economic Trinity that suggested essential Trinity. But for the historic process, the question might not have seemed worth asking, whether God is One only, or Three also, and the Three in One. The Hebrew mind, as represented by Philo, was only just beginning to be trinitarian, when Christ's life in the flesh compelled the Hebrew mind, as represented by Peter, Paul, and John, to a new theology. After Pentecost, bald Unitarianism was anachronous. Christian experience logically required three Divine Persons, of one and the same Divine Essence. Economic Trinity required essential Trinity.

Essential Trinity is anything but an arbitrary conception of God. Wiclif taught it at Oxford as a necessary doctrine of reason. Trinity is another name for the self-consciousness, and self-communion, of God. Father, Son, and Spirit are vastly more than the revelation of God to man; they are the revelation of God to Himself, and the intercourse of God with Himself. They suggest infinite fulness and richness of being. Our scientific definitions of God do not amount to much. At best, they formulate only very inadequate conceptions of Him. It is assumed that these scientific definitions of God take us farther than the Biblical descriptions of God. We had better not feel too sure of that. Attributes in action may impart a better knowledge than

attributes abstractly defined. Pictures for children may be better than creeds and catechisms. What we need is to see God in the life both of nature, and of man. This the Hebrew Prophets enable us to do by their anthropomorphic and anthropopathic pictures of God. If you say the pictures are childish, then I must say that we *are* children, all of us, and had better be children. It is no real scandal to science to be told, that "the eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good";[1] that "the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open unto their cry";[2] that the Lord "smelled a sweet savour"[3] from Noah's altar; while wicked men are consumed by "the breath of His nostrils";[4] that "the voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon";[5] and He "walketh upon the wings of the wind";[6] and that at last, in the Messianic time, the Lord will make "bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations."[7] God is not a mere aggregate of attributes. He has a personality as distinct and positive as yours and mine. But the personality is infinite in all its outgoings. God's being is a vast abyss which no plummet has ever sounded. Imagine all you can of boundless power, constantly at work; of boundless intelligence, constantly at work; of boundless passion, constantly at work: God is all that, and immeasurably more than that. What right has any one to say that God is passionless? God Himself has never said it. He is *not* passionless. Like the sun, He is all aflame; He rejoices in the truth; He hates a lie. He is pleased with what is

[1] Prov. xv. 3. [2] Ps. xxxiv. 15. [3] Gen. viii. 21. [4] Job iv. 9.
[5] Ps. xxix. 5. [6] Ps. civ. 3. [7] Is. lii. 10.

right, and displeased with what is wrong. Good men are the apple of His eye; bad men His abomination and His scorn. Rendered literally, "God is a righteous Judge, and a God who is angry every day." [1]

But God is love. So says John in that famous passage, over which the theologians are still disputing, whether the meaning be that love is only one of the Divine attributes, or is that very essence of God, into which every other attribute may be resolved. Some of the profoundest thinkers of our day accept these three words of John, "God is love," [2] as the final definition of God. Sunshine striking a tear-drop, may give us the seven colors of the rainbow; but the seven colors are all one blessed light. God creates, governs, judges, punishes, pities, redeems, and saves; but love is the root of all. It was love that created this wondrous universe, to which science can set no bounds. It was love that created angels, some of whom rebelled, and were "delivered into chains of darkness." [3] It was love that created this human brotherhood, all of whom have rebelled and gone astray. This rebellion was permitted; but was rebellion all the same. God feels it; and has always felt it. Absalom has broken his father's heart; and we are Absalom. The grand old King goes up over Olivet weeping, with his head covered, and his feet bare; and that King is God. Only He is the King Eternal, and His agony over sin is also eternal. This agony of God over human sin is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. God Himself atones, to Himself atones; and so atonement is both eternal and divine.

[1] Ps. vii. 11. [2] 1 John iv. 8, 16. [3] 2 Pet. ii. 4.

In that matchless epitome of the Gospel—the parable of the Prodigal Son, reported only by Luke, not a word is said, not a glimpse is given, of the father of the Prodigal during all that interval between the departure and the return. A veil is drawn over all those bitter, weary years. So has God yearned and suffered in the silent depths of His own eternity, waiting and watching for the repentant Prodigal. This yearning, grieved, and suffering God is the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; Son of God, Son of Mary. This sinless child should have had no griefs of His own. His sorrows could have been only those old eternal shadows of permitted sin. The cross on which He died, flinging out its arms as if to embrace the world, lifted up its head toward the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Our hearts now go back to Calvary; and from Calvary they go up to God.

One word more. This stupendous idea of eternal atonement carries with it the idea of universal atonement. Whatever it was, and is, it must needs have been infinite. No magnitude of sin, no multitude of sinners, can bankrupt its treasury of grace. "God so loved the *world*," [1] is its everlasting refrain. "He that *will*, let him take the water of life freely." [2] "Take" is the word, my hearers. Let us remember this. There is something for us to do. God Himself cannot pardon an impenitent offender. If pardon were offered, it could not be accepted. It is a law of our own being, that we must repent. O Lamb of God, slain so long ago, save us at last, when Thou comest in the clouds; and save us here to-day.

[1] John iii. 16. [2] Rev. xxii. 17.

It is one of the revelations of Scripture that we are to judge the angels; sitting above them on the shining heights. It may well be so. Those angels are the Imperial Guard, doing easy duty at home. We are the Tenth Legion, marching in from the swamps and forests of the far-off frontier; scarred and battered, but victorious over death and sin.

The following stanza from Dean Alford's grand hymn appears upon the last page of this, the last sermon written by Dr. Hitchcock. By a singular coincidence it was the stanza especially selected to be sung in the burial service at Dr. Hitchcock's funeral, although in entire ignorance of its existence in the manuscript.

Ten thousand times ten thousand
In sparkling raiment bright,
The armies of the ransom'd saints
Throng up the steeps of light:
'Tis finish'd, all is finish'd,
Their fight with death and sin:
Fling open wide the golden gates,
And let the victors in.

II

WHO CAN FORGIVE SINS?

WHO CAN FORGIVE SINS?

"Who can forgive sins but God only?"—MARK ii. 7.

You remember the story of the paralytic, told by all three of the Synoptists. It was near the beginning of the Galilean ministry. The place was Capernaum, on the Lake, under the hill, in the northeast corner of the little Plain of Gennesaret. The house was of the kind you can see in Syria to-day; not large, of a single story, some eight feet high, its roof generally of loose timbers laid straight across from wall to wall, covered with earth rolled hard. This particular house, where the Galilean Prophet then was, appears to have had its flat roof covered, in part at least, with tiles. A dense crowd had gathered, filling the house, and filling the yard. It was no mere running together of village neighbors. Pharisees and Doctors of the Law were there; Luke says, from every part of Galilee, and also from Judea and Jerusalem.[1]

Jesus, who had spent a good part of the previous year in Judea, and had been now not very long in Galilee, was speaking to this crowd. He stood, most likely, in the doorway, or near it, so as to be heard all around. Some one, palsy-stricken, wished to be set on his feet again; and knew who could do it for him, if

[1] Luke v. 17.

He only would. Four men,[1] neighbors probably of the paralytic, came along bringing him on a mat, holding on one at each corner of it. The eager, selfish crowd would not give way. Then the four men mounted the roof, by an outside stairway probably, took up some of the tiles,[2] and managed somehow to let the mat down, with the paralyzed man upon it, right at the feet of Jesus. One look was enough, both ways. Jesus saw the prayer that was in the poor man's heart, did not wait for it to reach his lips, but answered before the asking: "My child, thy sins have been forgiven thee." The thing was done. You should have seen the faces of those Scribes and Pharisees, I almost hear Mark say. The Galilean Prophet read *their* hearts too, hearing the questions that were not syllabled: "Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?"

This last unspoken question is our text to-day: "Who can forgive sins but God only?" Whether God Himself can, or cannot, we will consider by and by.

I. Whether God can forgive sins or not, it is certain that *no other being can.*

This was taken for granted by the Scribes and Pharisees, who heard what was said, and saw what was done, at Capernaum. It was taken for granted by Him whom they charged in their hearts with blasphemy. It has generally been taken for granted always and everywhere.

It is, indeed, one of those axiomatic propositions which gain nothing by being argued. And, for this

[1] Mark ii. 3. [2] Luke v. 19.

very reason, it has been losing its sinewy gripe on the average understanding and conscience of our time.

This is a scientific age no doubt. And we ought not to be sorry for it, nor afraid of it, although the science is inordinately physical instead of metaphysical, staggers under its burden of facts, and is frequently mistaking its own unproved hypotheses for laws.

But this is also a very sentimental age. In English fiction, for example, to say nothing of French and German, we have only to compare Dickens with Scott. In poetry, we have only to compare certain living favorites, whom I need not name, with Coleridge and Wordsworth. Flutes and trumpets are not more unlike; nor lilacs and oaks; nor yachts and frigates. We miss the old ring, the old fibre, the old majesty of movement.

In the handling of moral questions generally, the first appeal, and the final appeal, is apt to be to feeling; not the feeling that is deepest, but the feeling that is nearest the surface, and responds so quickly to mere pathos. Now that satire has found a name for this weak sentimentality, a name not to be spoken here, we may hope to see less of it. But we shall not so soon be rid of its effects. It has taken the iron out of our blood; the brawn out of our ethics and politics; the justice and judgment out of our theology.

One revival that I am praying for, is a revival of axioms, of moral axioms. It is a poor kind of intellect that takes nothing for granted. Water, whatever Chemistry may say of it, drowns; and fire burns; and frost freezes. Right is right, and conscience approves it. Wrong is wrong, and conscience condemns it. It was

so yesterday; is so to-day; and will be just the same to-morrow, and forever.

Let us look now, for a little, into this matter of forgiveness. I ask you to concede me nothing except barely a personal God, over against this human conscience of right and wrong. If I were cast alone on a tropical island, whither nobody would ever follow me, and where, with little effort, I might live comfortably for many years, and I should give way grossly to an inordinate appetite for food and drink, but after awhile should see my folly, and repent bitterly of my intemperance, having wronged no human being but myself, could I forgive myself? No, I could not. There is another factor in this problem, greater than I. I have done more than wrong myself. As a creature, I have wronged my Creator. I have sinned against the laws ordained by Him for the health and comfort of my body. I have sinned against the image of God in my soul, putting it to shame in this subjection to bestial appetite; and I cannot look God in the face. I have no right to forgive myself. I cannot forgive myself. God would have to die first. Eternity would have to end first. This is what conscience says to-day. This is what conscience will say to-morrow, and forever.

Look again. The scene is changed. I am no longer alone on my tropical island. Others have joined me there; men and women. Children are born. Society developes. Institutions are organized. Some of us are farmers. Some are mechanics. Some are tradesmen, and bankers. Some are artists. Some are physicians, and lawyers. Clergymen are not called for, revealed religion finding no place in our Utopia. Things move

on very smoothly for awhile. By and by, we begin to crowd one another. Life becomes a rivalry, and a struggle. The strong keep the sidewalk; the weak go to the wall. We begin to talk about "the survival of the fittest." Men live more and more by their wits. Carpenters, and masons, and plumbers build us poor houses. Farmers water their milk, and sell it for pure; or sell their grain, scanting the measure. The baker's loaf is under weight. The grocer also forgets how many ounces it takes to make a pound. Tea, coffee, flour, sugar, everything, is adulterated, even the medicines. Tradesmen promise to be contented with a ten per centum clear profit; but try to get fifteen or twenty. Wild land on the other side of the island is put upon the market. Ore is found, of iron, or gold, or silver; very shortly a company is formed, and its stock goes booming up, or comes crashing down, without much regard to its intrinsic value. Physicians call one another quacks. Lawyers call one another pettifoggers. Clergymen, if there were any, might be calling one another heretics. Cultured and fashionable women envy and slur one another. The old domestic contentment and purity give place to their opposites. The most tender and sacred ties are ruptured. By and by, violence breaks out, in robbery and murder. And we begin to be alarmed. Society is threatened with paralysis. What can be done to save it? Some Confucian John the Baptist appears, crying shame, and preaching repentance and reformation. What happens? First of all, we stop doing the bad things; stop short. Then we beg one another's forgiveness, making all possible reparation. Of course we do. And there are no human

beings anywhere else that we know about, to be affected, one way or the other, by any acts of ours. It is all our own affair exclusively. May we not, then, forgive one another, and be done with it, wholly and forever? No, we may not. We are not alone here on our little island. We have sinned against God, in sinning against one another; and we must answer to Him for it. Mutual forgiveness is as illogical as self-forgiveness. As far as it goes, of course it is good; but it goes only a very little way. We have no right to forgive one another. We cannot forgive one another. Forgiveness, real and complete, can neither go nor come, can neither be given nor accepted, between man and man. As I have said before, God would have to die first. Eternity would have to end first. This is what conscience says to-day, will say to-morrow, and will say forever.

I am almost ashamed to be insisting upon anything so elementary and axiomatic. But I dare not be ashamed of it. There is something in the air which predisposes us to think lightly of sin. And I must warn you against it; and warn myself against it. Questions of conscience are only in part subjective and social. They are between us and the Unseen; between us and the Eternal; between us and the All-Just; between us and the All-Terrible. I do not see nor touch Him yet. But when this tired breast stops heaving, and this tired pulse stops beating, quick as thought, quicker than lightning, I shall be with Him, face to face. Only one question shall I then care to have answered: *Can He forgive?* I do not, dare not, can not forgive myself; can He forgive me? Yes? or No?

II. Let us ask, and answer this question now: *Can God forgive?*

In the dainty, superficial thinking of our time, which comes of so much self-indulgence, softening the mental and moral fibre, Divine forgiveness is easy. It is assumed that suffering must cease some time. A bold assumption, in the face of a creation which has always sighed and groaned. If God is not impeached or disturbed by suffering to-day, why need He be to-morrow, or next day, or the next? Endlessness of anything appals and bewilders the imagination, but never staggers the reason. If suffering be the shadow of sin, the mystery, of course, is not in the suffering, but in the sin. And the awful mystery of sin is not in its chronology, but in its essence; not in its continuance, but in its origin.

Much is said also of our insignificance, and that, too, by men who, in other relations, make great account of the dignity of human nature. God, it is said, can suffer no loss at our hands. We cannot rob Him of any treasure. We cannot compromise His character. We cannot, for one moment, disturb the serenity in which He dwells. Nothing that we can do, or say, or think, or feel, touches Him at all. We might as well be shooting arrows at the stars.

Somebody once asked Daniel Webster what was the most important thought that ever occupied his mind. The propriety of the question hardly equalled the solidity of the answer. "The most important thought that ever occupied my mind," said he, "was that of my individual responsibility to God."[1] The talk of twenty

[1] Peter Harvey's Reminiscences, p. 404.

minutes that followed this solemn utterance, clung long to the memories of the few that heard it, but was never committed to writing.

This conversation occurred at one of the Public Houses in this city. Nobody, here in New York, probably, ever heard a grander sermon, before or since. It touched what is, after all, the first and deepest of the mysteries. Every summer I improve the opportunity of studying the faces of animals on the farm; especially the dogs, the horses, the oxen, and the cows. I am much impressed by the completeness of their subjection to man. Great, strong creatures that might trample us under foot, or catch the bits in their teeth, and run away with us, tearing us all to pieces. I am also much impressed by their susceptibility to the kindness of man. I am never tired of looking into their large, calm eyes. The Homeric *βοῶπις Ἥρη* is a compliment to the Goddess. I resent the roughness with which they are sometimes handled. It pains me to think of so much intelligence, so much fidelity, and so much affection as doomed to extinction. And yet I see in these creatures no trace of what agitates my soul when I look up sometimes into the starry sky. I am weaker than some of them, I am crushed before the moth; but the awful, Infinite God never takes His eyes off of me, day nor night, and never lets a deed, nor a thought, nor a feeling, of mine go unmarked in the great book.

Suppose now I am conscious of sin, as I certainly am; what kind of an eternity awaits me? Certainly, God cannot change at all. He can never hate what He has always loved; can never love what He has always

hated. Nor can He annihilate the facts. What I have done, is done. What I was, I was. What I am, I am. Everything is vividly remembered, and everything is sharply seen by Him, and by me. And we know one another; He and I. Of course, He cannot forget. Nor can I forget. But can He *forgive?*

Psychology admits no possibility of forgiveness. On purely rational grounds, it is inconceivable. Plato could see nothing ahead but either penalty, or penance. Some speakers and writers of our time, affecting philosophy, are eloquent about work and wages, being and condition, character and destiny. Very well, gentlemen: but do you know what you are saying?

You hate our iron-clad Orthodoxy. But our Creed, as you must yourselves admit, has some mercy in it; while your Creed has no mercy in it at all. To be consistent, you should get rid of your idea of a personal God, as perhaps you have already. As you put things, this universe might just as well be governed by some impersonal Force. The laws are all alike, whether physical or moral.

It is just here that the road forks: Plato and his disciples going one way, the Nazarene and His disciples going the other way. Plato's philosophy, monotheistic in its general intent and aim, had yet some pantheistic elements in it. Our God has moral personality; and is Three in One. We also are His children, made in His image. And though, as things were ordered, we were sure to sin, and have sinned, and are to sin, He loved, and loves us still. And in the unsearchable depths of His being, in eternity, He took upon Himself the burden of this sin.

Just what Atonement is, I cannot tell you, since the Biblical terminology is all of it figurative. But this I may believe, and this I must believe, that the atonement, in which I cast the anchor of my hope, is not temporal, but eternal. God, within Himself, inflicted that upon Himself, and suffered that from Himself, into which His angels have never looked, and never can. Only this hint has been given of it, that the Lamb was slain before the morning stars sang together. To call it debt cancelled, or ransom paid, or anger appeased, is only to touch the border of a tremendous mystery.

Whatever it was, or is, it expresses the innermost character of God. It reveals an intensity of infinite affection of which no finite intelligence would have dared to dream; an affection which endures in spite of sin, and which has set out to conquer sin. So is it permitted us to say that "God is Love." This may not be strictest formal definition. But we never say God is Justice: we only say that God is just. Atonement suggests and warrants the declaration that "God is *Love*."

Somehow, on the basis of this atonement, and in pursuance of its purpose, God forgives.

What is forgiveness? Not mere remission of penalty. Moral penalty never can be remitted without moral change. How is it with us? My neighbor commits a trespass, says he is sorry for it, does what he can to repair the damage inflicted upon me, and begs to be forgiven. Would he repeat the trespass to-morrow, if he were tempted, and had the chance? If so, then I cannot forgive him to-day; not, will not, but *cannot*, absolutely *cannot* forgive him. Nor can he be

forgiven. He must be sorry enough not to do it again. Then I can forgive him: So far, I mean, as forgiveness is possible between man and man. And he can, to the same extent, be forgiven. On any other terms, forgiveness is a solecism, an absurdity, a downright immorality. To forgive an offence that I know will be repeated is to be accessory to that offence, before and after.

Divine forgiveness can go no farther than human forgiveness, and achieve no more. It must observe the same ethical laws. It must have the same high ethical tone. "Go, and sin no more," is always the condition of forgiveness; not emphasized in the case of the repenting Malefactor, simply because he was about to die. This, in another form, is the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith, not reconciled, but identified, with the Jacobean doctrine of justification by works. Martin Luther must have repented long ago of what he said so rashly about the Epistle of James, calling it "a veritable straw-epistle." James himself, the writer of this Epistle, had his brains beaten out with a fuller's club; and the wiser part of the Jewish people, Hegesippus informs us, looked upon the Roman Conquest as a Divine Judgment upon them for their crime. The early Protestantism, doing violence to the same Apostle, provoked the rod of the same providence. Luther died lamenting Protestant declensions and scandals. What Protestantism needs to-day is more ethics, more of the old penitential discipline, more character.

Antinomianism, to be sure, is one of the branded heresies; and Antinomians are in sufficiently bad repute. But who ever heard of Nomians? We say

Legalists instead, using the word in a bad sense. We had better let James be heard.

Faith and works are soul and body. Works are of faith, and faith is itself a work, and grace gives it all. No man is forgiven till he repents; no man repents till he believes; and no man believes without obedience. The root, the trunk, the branches, and the leaves are all one tree. In short, the end of forgiveness is simply character: the end, the demonstration, and the measure of it all.

Character is imperfect now. We are forgiven; and we sin again. We do not mean to sin: we mean not to sin. But when we would do good, evil is present with us. The good we would, we do not. The evil we would not, that we do. Ormuzd and Ahriman are in all our lives. It is the old and awful mystery, against which we strike our heads as against an adamantine wall. We sail over vexed and tossing seas: the storms of wild passion may have ceased; but the heavy, long ground-swell of inbred sin rolls on.

Life is not victory, but battle. Fight on, fight on. The perfect character shall come at last. What, O what will it be to fight no more? And shall we then forget the battles? Shall we then forget our sins? Why should we? Hated, renounced, subdued, let them hang on the walls of memory, like the shields of vanquished enemies. Be patient a little longer. By and by, in our hushed and waiting chambers, each in his turn, we shall hear the sunset gun.

III

RELIGION, THE DOING OF GOD'S WILL

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"Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father who is in Heaven."—MATTHEW vii. 21.

THESE words are taken from Christ's Sermon on the Mount. It is in this same discourse that He speaks of the strait gate, and the narrow way, which leadeth unto life; and of the wide gate, and the broad way, that leadeth unto death; seeking evidently to make the impression, that it is an easy thing for us to be lost, and not an easy thing for us to be saved.

The same point is brought to view in a conversation which our Lord had with His disciples near the end of His life, as He was journeying with them for the last time towards Jerusalem. "And one said unto Him, Lord, are they few that are saved? And He said unto them, Strive to enter in by the narrow door; for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able."[1] As though His reply had been: Only a few will be saved, and they at the cost of a most intense and bitter struggle. Discipleship is not a thing of ease, but of agony.

And so our Master has put a stern face upon the

[1] Luke xiii. 23, 24.

Christian life. The gateway to it is narrow, and the path is hard; not gently sloping towards the heavens, but of sharp and wearisome ascent, over the mountains and amongst the clouds; while those who are in it are not a thronging caravan, winding on with joyous music, but a slender line of pilgrims, climbing at once, and fighting, as soldiers who storm a fortress. This is one aspect of the Christian life.

But there are other passages of a much milder and more genial tone. Such, for example, as, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me: for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."[1] An utterance, the cadence of which is tremulous and tender with a divine compassion, forbidding distrust, and yearning to save us all. And this is another aspect of the Christian life.

That these two modes of speech, apparently so much at variance, involve really no mutual contradiction, but are only different aspects of one and the same grand economy of life, will be put at once beyond all question, if we but observe the different classes of persons to whom they were addressed. To souls harassed and burdened by the weight of the law, moral and ceremonial, painfully conscious of their own deficiencies, brought to desperation by the scourgings of conscience, and willing to accept any deliverance which God may offer, Christ presents Himself as a helping Friend. Gentle as a summer breeze, He will break no bruised reed, He will quench no smoking wick. His yoke is

[1] Matt. xi. 28–30.

easy and His burden light.[1] But to souls once lifted up out of their legal thraldom, and once delivered over into the freedom of the Gospel, this same Christ presents Himself as a Master; and His word is, "Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."[2]

Equally notable is the seeming contradiction, but real harmony, between Paul and James, both of them speak of one and the same man, Abraham. "To him that worketh not . . . ." says Paul, "his faith is counted for righteousness."[3] "Ye see then," says James, "how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."[4] "By faith," says Paul; "by works," says James. Martin Luther, seeking to deliver and revive a Church fettered and paralyzed by the Mediæval heresy, which made faith and works co-ordinate as the ground of acceptance with God, has no patience with this Epistle of James, calls it an "Epistle of straw," and preaches Christ in a strain of well-nigh intemperate and lawless liberty. "The Gospel," he says in his trenchant style, "preaches nothing of the merit of works; he that says the Gospel requires works for salvation, I say, flat and plain, is a liar."[5] But this first conflict being over, the thraldom broken, and the life renewed, those who follow Luther proclaim once more the necessity of works. "We dream not," says Calvin, "of a faith which is devoid of good works, nor of a justification which can exist without them."[6] And there is falsehood in neither of these statements; nor any real contradiction between them. Only the truth

[1] Matt. xi. 28–30.
[2] John xv. 14.
[3] Rom. iv. 5.
[4] James ii. 24.
[5] Table Talk, p. 283.
[6] Inst., vol. ii. p. 386.

has a double front. Facing towards formalism, its front is grace. Facing towards the conscience of a pardoned sinner, rejoicing in hope, its front is good works.

Such is the law of utterance on this subject as established by Christ Himself, observed by His Apostles, observed by the great champions of the Protestant Reformation, and demanding to be observed by us. Addressing the unregenerate, who writhe under the bondage of evil, and are pining to be delivered, our message is, "Believe and be saved." But the moment belief is rendered, and the deliverance achieved, while yet the eyes are streaming with grateful tears, and the shout of triumph is bursting from the lips, we confront the jubilant disciple with these stern words of our Redeemer: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."[1]

To the latter class of persons, the ransomed and the rejoicing, is my errand now. I come to speak not of grace, but of duty; not of faith, but of works; not of the sweet beginnings of the Christian life, in the midst of which we may stand and shout, but of the far-reaching, rugged, and upward path, along which the bugle calls us to march and struggle for our crown.

Our text, it will be observed, is in close connection with what was said of the strait gate, and the narrow way. And few, few there be that find it. "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that *doeth the will* of My Father, who is in Heaven." As to the exact meaning of these words, it may be remarked, that to call Christ, Lord, is to acknowledge Him as the Messiah; and by

[1] Matt. xvi. 24.

the repetition of the address, Lord, Lord, it is implied that the acknowledgment is eager and ardent. In a word, the head is orthodox, and the heart, apparently, is warm. And yet this correct and glowing acknowledgment of Christ as the Messiah, however emphatic, and however fervid, is not sufficient to save the soul. As for the orthodoxy of it, the devils also believe. And as for the fervor of it, self-deception is as easy, as the heart is deceitful above all things. Any man, of course, will think he loves Christ, if he only imagines that Christ will save him; while, after all, it is not Christ that he loves, but only his own soul, selfishly sighing and scheming to have it saved. Neither sound beliefs, therefore, nor ardent affections, are enough. There is also something to be done; there are self-denials to be endured; there is a warfare to be waged; a life-long service to be accomplished. In short, we are to be saved, through Christ, not by our beliefs, nor by our feelings, but by our lives; by what we are, as embodied in what we do. Religion is not a dogma, nor an emotion, but a service. Our Redemption is not of the head alone, nor of the heart alone, but pre-eminently and most decisively, of the life, as the only infallible criterion of what we really are. It is to the elucidation and enforcement of this important truth, that your attention is now invited.

I. In the first place, let us be warned against making our religion a matter merely of opinion.

It is implied in our text, that there were persons amongst the Jews who acknowledged Christ as the Messiah, perhaps had joined themselves to His com-

pany, and yet were not His genuine disciples. They were persuaded of His Divine authority and mission, on many points understood and relished His teachings, but were not the subjects of His grace. Some of this class fell away from their discipleship as the instructions of the Master deepened. As for example, on that memorable occasion, when our Lord told His hearers that they must eat His flesh and drink His blood, in order to have eternal life; which so scandalized many of His disciples even, that, as John relates, they "went back and walked no more with Him."[1] While others, probably, who withstood this shock of staggering doctrine, may have quailed and fainted under the storm of persecution, which presently began to rage.

Similar instances abound in the history of the Christian Church. Multitudes have joined themselves to the people of God, to all appearance savingly impressed by Christian truth, and running well for a time, only at length to fall into heresy and schism, and lose their souls. Other multitudes, who were far enough from any heresy of doctrine, have yet been Christians only in their opinions, disciples of the Man of Nazareth only as of some master in philosophy, with no renewal of the heart, and no radical transformation of the life.

In our day, the number of such mere speculative believers is doubtless large. The religion of Christ, in its course over the globe, and down through history, has been winning for itself a fulness and force of demonstration, which now almost compels the reverence of a thinking mind. The infidelity, which, in Bishop Butler's day would scarcely stoop to entertain with seriousness the

[1] John vi. 53, 66.

great questions of our Christian Faith, has since then been obliged to entertain these questions, and, with humbled crest, has been fairly routed from the field. Into many spheres has the strife been carried, and in many forms of assault have our lines been tried; but always, and at every point, with the same discomfiture of the assaulting host. The Apologists of the early centuries vanquished only single champions of error; now, whole battalions are dissolving before the breadth and vigor of our charge. In all the higher walks of learning, as in all the better walks of life, room has been made for Christianity as an established and honored fact. So that the general current of opinion in most of the Christian countries of the world, is distinctly Christian. Amongst the kingdoms of the earth, established for earthly ends, there stands acknowledged a kingdom of truth and grace, which is destined to outlast them all. That would be regarded but a blind philosophy of history, which should fail to make the person of Christ the centre of its radiating lines. And that would be regarded but a chattering and impotent philanthropy, which should dream of any other Millennium of peace and righteousness, than the one promised in the Scriptures.

Such, we say, are now the sentiments of wise and thoughtful men. Their only hope for the world is in the religion of Christ. They acknowledge Him as the only possible Redeemer of a stricken and suffering race. And how many may be resting indolently in such a hope, and taking credit to themselves for such an acknowledgment, making Christian opinions a substitute for Christian experience, God only knows. But

I am afraid there are many such. It is a singular device of Satan, this of making the sublimest of truths an opiate, rather than a stimulant to the human will; a singular delusion, this of mistaking the assent of the understanding for the renewal of the heart; the sinful human soul calmly measuring, and, it may be, profoundly admiring, the redemptive economy of the Gospel, without advancing to a personal acceptance of it; standing by the side of this blessed Bethesda of heavenly grace, to applaud its miracles of healing, and yet never stepping in. We speak with pride, sometimes, of our puissant Christendom, so industrious, so intelligent, so moral, with its ubiquitous commerce, its adorning arts, its halls of learning, its happy firesides, and its noble charities. And yet what is our vaunted Christendom but a vast assemblage of believing but disobedient men? The so-called Christian nations, in what one of them all is there more than a feeble fraction of truly regenerated and praying men? Our Christian Sabbath congregations, gathered to hear the Gospel, in which of them are not the real followers of Christ outnumbered by more than two to one? Judged of by merely outward tokens, Christianity would seem to be in the ascendant. Imperial edicts no longer assail her thickening ranks, the proudest philosophies have gone down before her doctrines, and the boundaries of heathendom are steadily retreating wherever she plants her invading foot. But these outward tokens are deceptive. They indicate the acceptance of Christianity as an opinion, a polity, a culture, while they fail to witness for the acceptance of it as an inward, spiritual, renovating force. The Gospel preacher, stand where

he will, is sure of a respectful, perhaps an applauding audience; but the chiefest burden of his message is not regarded, and the chiefest longing of his heart is not realized. The Cross of Christ is no offence to the understanding of his hearers, but their proud wills are not bowed before it. He faces a masked battery of most orthodox, but most resolute impenitence.

But this is not the worst of it. Within the Church itself, obviously enough, there are many persons, with whom belief is made a substitute for something deeper and better. Of such pre-eminently are the knights-errant of orthodoxy, who ride up and down, vexing the age with the shibboleths of their artificial and arbitrary creeds. But not these alone. The number is not small of such as are unconsciously lifting the dogma above the life. The intellect arranges for itself, in admirable proportions, the whole system of revealed truth, propounds, in careful statements, its doctrine of man, its doctrine of God, its doctrine of Redemption, and then pauses in admiration of the imposing structure, or goes about to praise it, and recommend it, mistaking thought for feeling, opinion for experience, doctrine for life. The glow experienced is of the intellect. Sin, indeed, is acknowledged and emphasized; the throne of God planted firmly upon its pillars of righteousness, overlooking, without a stain upon it, all this weltering chaos of human evil; and redemption is hailed, as the wisdom of God, mediating sublimely between His outraged law and His pitying love. All this may lie in clearest vision before the soul, without stirring its depths. Sin may have its enormity measured in speculation, without being bitterly repented of and for-

saken. God and His ways may be justified, without being loved. The plan of salvation through atoning blood may be saluted as a grand solution of a stupendous moral problem, without being made the stay of hope; welcomed as a relief to reason, but not applied as a healing power to the wounded heart. Said William Law to John Wesley, "The head can as easily amuse itself with a living and justifying faith in the blood of Jesus, as with any other notion." It is even so. A truer word, pointed in warning against a greater peril, was never uttered. The mistake in question is a very subtle one, but very serious, and more common than, perhaps, we think.

As thus of the doctrines, so also of the duties of our religion. These duties may be objects merely of belief, arranged in well-ordered systems, and acknowledged to be the proper code of life, without being actually reduced to practice. The study of God's word, the keeping of holy time, prayer and praise, a clean heart and a clean life, with self-denying exertions, in all feasible and hopeful ways, for the good of others, may all be clearly recognized as Christian duties, without being discharged. The most sacred duty may thus decay into a dogma, asking only to be believed. "I go, sir," answered the son in the Parable, "but went not."

II. In the second place, let us be warned against making our religion a matter merely of feeling.

Of this also there is danger. In the life-time of our Redeemer, as we have seen, there were those who not only acknowledged Him as the Messiah, but were forward and demonstrative in that acknowledgment; and

yet were no true disciples of Him. Right in doctrine, and right, apparently, in feeling, still they knew Him not, nor He, them. Their language was not merely, Lord, but Lord, Lord; and yet, after all, they perished, neither the orthodoxy of their belief, nor the seeming fervor of it, availing to save them.

Very painful is it to think, how many there may have been, down through all the Christian centuries, who have wholly misjudged in regard to their own spiritual state. Of sheer, deliberate hypocrisy, there has not been so very much; certainly not, if the entire course of our Christian history be taken into account. At times, no doubt, hypocrisy has abounded, as under despotisms like that of the Constantines and of Theodosius, which have adopted Christianity as the religion of the State, making the profession of it indispensable to civil office and emolument, and fencing it about with pains and penalties. But here with us, where Church and State are as utterly divorced as they ever can be, and society has pledged itself that no man shall be challenged for his faith, there is almost no motive whatever for a false profession. We have neither the soil nor the climate for so noxious a growth. Now and then, for private reasons, religion may be counterfeited, but such cases are extremely rare. Most of those amongst us who belong to the Church, without belonging to Christ, are the victims of self-deception. They fondly imagine themselves the subjects of a work of grace, which has never been accomplished. They are deceiving others, only because they have first deceived themselves.

There may be, no doubt, what passes for real peni-

tence, and a real joy in Christ, but which, in fact, is wholly a delusion. What seems to be a godly sorrow for sin, may be nothing more than remorse; and what seems to be peace and joy in believing, nothing more than the selfish exultation of the soul in its imagined deliverance from the wrath to come. The peril at this point is prodigious, having its root and nourishment in our sensitive nature, so eager and clamorous for peace and safety, so open to torture from the apprehension of coming evil. A peril enhanced, too, it may be, by the very endeavors which are made by preachers to arrest the attention of the careless, and persuade them to seek in season for the way of life. If selfishness be the very essence of sin, then there is a kind of inevitable contradiction between *saving* the soul, and *seeking* to save it. Only he that loses his life, ever finds it. Only that sorrow for sin is genuine, which rises above ourselves, and is measured by that infinite majesty, against which the sin was committed. A willingness to be damned, as the only sufficient test of our fitness to be saved, is, indeed, a monstrous heresy, which I cannot think of endorsing; and yet it points towards one of the profoundest and most precious of Christian truths. It points us away from ourselves to God, and summons us to sink all our own little personal solicitudes, whether for time or eternity, in the bottomless depth of an awful reverence and love for His authority and honor. And those who know nothing of this experience, who are conscious only of being anxious to be saved, may be very sure that they are still in bondage to evil; the seeming repentance being only a fear of penalty, the seeming delight in Christ, only gratitude in advance for expected benefits.

But even the truly regenerate are not wholly free from peril in this matter. There are different types of piety, of different degrees of purity. What is not a delusion, but a reality, may yet be vitiated. The selfish element may intrude and poison it. Religion may come to be looked upon too much as a round or series of emotions, and the proof of its presence sought for, too exclusively, in the vividness and vigor of these emotions. The soul, instead of going out of itself after Christ, looking away to His cross and upwards to His crown, searches within itself for the warrant of its hopes. The very phrase so current amongst us, "an *experience* of religion," indicates this error. The work of grace, which, as it comes from God, should go out after Him, throbbing with a divine pulse, sinks down and terminates too much within us. We make it a thing of feeling, which, from its very nature, may be delusive; or, if genuine, comparatively meagre and fruitless. There transpires within us an experience, which is named repentance, another, which goes by the name of faith, another, which is known as hope, while over all there plays the wing of a lightsome joy. And if these experiences can only be brought to pass in their proper order and intensity, the soul is tempted to reckon itself in a thriving state. The first beginning of these experiences is hailed as the birth of grace, and every subsequent repetition of them, with sensibly freshened fervor, a reviving of God's work. Thus religion, which should be a solid structure to the praise of Divine grace, becomes an unsubstantial thing of inward moods, afloat upon the changeful tide within us, uplifted or depressed as our feelings rise or ebb.

In our own country the danger of mistake in this direction is great. With all our constitutional shrewdness of intellect, and homely, practical common sense, we are yet an excitable people. Our keen, stimulating climate, our vast continent, provoking to boundless enterprise, the perpetual fluctuations of our social life, the very constitution of our government, involving such frequent appeals to the masses, all conspire to give us a character not unlike that of the old Athenian Democracy, as it was in the day when Paul addressed it on the Acropolis. We are also a religious people. The infidelity of France was offered us, but refused; as we shall also refuse the infidelity now offered us by Germany. That we are Protestant, as well as religious, is evinced by the multitude of sects amongst us, more than fifty in all. And, above all, this has been preeminently the land of revivals; partly the product, and partly the cause, of what we are. These revivals have been the wonder of Europe; glorious works of Divine grace, as cannot be doubted, and yet encouraging a type of piety, which has its defects and its perils. The danger has been, and is, that our religious life may be disproportionately emotional, running up into fever heats, only to run down into ague chills.

This piety of moods and feelings, which goes by spasms, and not by the even pulses of a robust life, is not the sort of piety we need, my hearers. It dishonors our Master, who has something larger to do for us than simply to make us happy in our religion. It wrongs our own souls, which ought to be looking higher than their own enjoyment. It defrauds a world burdened with woes and perishing for lack of

vision, which asks something more of us than prayers and psalms.

III. Finally, let us be moved to make our religion a matter of the life; finding the test and measure of our discipleship, neither in what we believe, nor in what we feel, but in what we are, as announcing itself in what we do.

Not that we counsel the disparagement of Christian doctrine. We do not forget that it is through the truth, though not by it, that men are to be sanctified and saved. Christianity is, and must be, doctrine, or it cannot be at all. There must be religious opinions, more or less clearly defined, conditioning the religious life; and the more clearly defined, the better. There must be an opinion about the native character of man; an opinion about the person and work of Christ; an opinion about the ground and mode of our acceptance with God. And the nearer we come to the teachings of Scripture, as interpreted by the Christian consciousness of the successive generations of believers; the nearer we come to those grand settlements of doctrine effected by the great expounders of doctrine, as Athanasius, Augustine, Luther, Calvin, and Edwards, the nearer we shall come to the hidings of Christian power.

Neither would we disparage religious feeling. The new life has its beginning in feeling; while to be past feeling is the surest mark of reprobation. It is impossible for a man to be convinced of sin by the Spirit of God without being profoundly agitated. An accusing conscience lashes the soul as a tempest lashes the ocean. And equally impossible is it, to find relief in believing,

without a fervid gust of triumphant and grateful emotion. A religion wholly without excitement would be a body without a pulse, a sea without tides or winds, a morning without sunlight and the songs of birds.

But our text, while it slurs neither doctrine nor feeling, points us beyond them to the life. Not every one that saith unto Christ, Lord; not even every one that saith unto Him, Lord, Lord; but only he that serves Him, is His disciple indeed. Not belief, not emotion, but obedience, is the test. Mere belief would make religion a mere theology. Mere emotion would make it a mere excitement. While the true, Divine idea of it, is a life, begotten of grace in the depths of the human soul, subduing to Christ all the powers of the soul, and incarnating itself in a patient, steady, sturdy service. In short, it is the doing of the will of the Father, which entitles us to a solid assurance of our redemption by the Son. Doing this will, we say; not preaching it, as something which ought to be done; not indolently sighing to do it, and then lamenting that we do it not; but the thing itself, in actual achievement, from day to day, from month to month, from year to year. Thus religion rises on us in its own imperial majesty. It is no mere delight of the understanding in the doctrines of our faith; no mere excitement of the sensibilities, now harrowed by fear, and now jubilant in hope; but a warfare and a work, a warfare against sin, and a work for God. And so our thoughts, our cares, our aims, get shifted away from ourselves to a worthier centre. We look not within ourselves, but above us, for the guiding word; while the roots of our Christian hope are nourished more by our duties than our joys. Under every

burden of service, in every weariness of marching, in every peril of battle, as shouted the old Crusaders, so shout we, "It is the will of God."

What, then, is God's will? So far as we ourselves are concerned, this is the will of God, says an Apostle, even our sanctification.[1] That we advance in holiness, subduing our sins, that we grow every day more pure, more true, more fruitful, more like Christ, our pattern, this is the will of God concerning us. It is the making our religion not an entertainment, but a service. We are to set before us the perfect standard, and then struggle to shape our lives to it. Personal sanctity must be made a business of. Those saints of the Middle Ages, like Tauler and A'Kempis, who wrestled so hard for holiness, slaying so sternly their bosom sins, and looking so meekly, yet so fixedly, to Christ, may well be invoked as the rebukers of our sloth. It is at just this point that the piety of our day is the most sadly defective. It is not sufficiently inflamed with a desire after sanctity. It is self-indulgent, where it ought to be self-denying; tolerant of impurities and infirmities, of which it ought to be utterly intolerant; cold and slack, where it ought to be warm and diligent; asleep over faults of character, and in the presence of spiritual dangers, which ought to awaken a godly jealousy and a godly fear. It is true, we are saved by hope; and yet it is equally true, that he who hath this hope in him, should purify himself, as Christ is pure. In a word, it is character that is required of us; laid, indeed, in grace, and imperfect, at the best, needing to shelter itself behind the perfect righteousness of Christ, and

[1] 1 Thess. iv. 3.

yet a piece of solid moral masonry, to be carried on, and carried up, by a life-long toil. And this, too, not for our own sake, but for Christ's sake, and because God so wills it. Our own spiritual comfort, the sure fruit of a careful walk with God, though an incident, is not to be the end, of our endeavors; but all we do, is to be out of simple loyalty to redeeming love. Mere obedience to conscience, is but a Pagan virtue, which, in the highest sphere, is not a virtue at all. Virtue, for us, is obedience to God in Christ. Painstaking, of course, it will be, that there may be no blot upon the life; self-denying, as against our indolence, our appetites, and our passions; asking only for duty, though we knew it were asking for martyrdom; and all for Christ. Such is the will of God concerning us; and only he who does it, should reckon himself a child of God.

But besides this resolute endeavor after personal sanctity, we have duties also towards our Christian brethren. The Fellowship of the Saints, the Church Catholic on earth, under whatever names or forms, as widely reaching as Christendom itself, these are the only permitted boundaries of our love. Wheresoever Christ has gone with His quickening grace, there must we also follow with the mantle of Christian charity. They who love a common Lord, must love each other. The essential oneness of the Church is now no longer visible. The outward communion is broken. First, the Orient and the Occident fell apart, eight hundred years ago. Three hundred years ago, the Occident was divided. And since then the sects have multiplied, till we are almost ashamed to number them. These sects

proclaim, indeed, not the decay, but the vitality and the growth of our Lord's Kingdom; and yet its ripest life is in that future, which shall restore the seamless garment. Meanwhile, we have only to tax our charity the more, and give it an impulse, which shall force it over the dividing lines. And yet each one of us must be loyal to his own communion, knitting himself the closest with those, to whom he stands the nearest. The local Church, with which we may happen to be connected, has special claims upon us. We owe it a heavy debt of service; not on the Sabbath only, when we assemble for public worship and instruction, but in all its humbler gatherings for prayer and praise, and in all the channels of its life.

Nor is this all. The will of God concerning us has a wider sweep even than the Church; it embraces the world. This world lieth in wickedness; only one-third of it even nominally Christian, all the rest of it Heathen, Jewish, Mohammedan, in need of Christ, and perishing because it knows Him not. There is more between us and it, than the tie of a common human brotherhood. This scene of moral ruin is the inheritance of our Lord, made over to Him in the covenant of redemption. For this world He died, making an atonement sufficient for all its sin; and over it He bends in mercy from His throne of grace, entreating its return to God. This weaves for us a new bond of relationship, firmer and more sacred than that of a common descent from Adam. The ministry of reconciliation, commenced by our Lord Himself, is now committed to His followers. They are now His ambassadors, as He, in His ministry, was the ambassador of

God the Father. There is, indeed, a special ministry of the word, beginning with the Apostles, descending from them to us who are now preachers of righteousness, and destined to endure to the end of time. But there is also a wider ministry of the universal brotherhood of believers. Mere discipleship is also, in some sort, an Apostleship. We are all of us ambassadors of Christ. Just as soon as we are brought, by the grace of God, to a saving knowledge of the Gospel, we are called to be dispensers of it to others; taking first those who are nearest to us, but pausing not till we have touched the farthest boundaries of the globe. The Mediæval piety, so admirable in some respects, was defective in this, that it did no more for a dying world. The reformers were hindered, by the abundance and urgency of their work at home, from undertaking any service upon heathen shores. But an ardent missionary zeal, the harbinger, as we trust, of the Millennium, is now kindling in the bosom of the Church. And the time in near at hand, when not a soul, that rejoices in a Christian hope, will be excused, or will wish to be excused, from laboring for other souls. There is enough for us all to do. Even in these Christian cities, there is a frightful waste of heathenism, weltering at our very feet. We must subdue it to the Cross of Christ. Over the seas are millions of heathens, darkening the continents. To them also must we send the light of life. Such is the commandment of our Lord. Such is the service laid upon us, to be the test and measure of our faith.

Such, my hearers, is our blessed Lord's own definition of true discipleship. Our religion must be

more to us than a mere opinion, more than a mere excitement of feeling; it must be resolute and manly service. Our whole life, from its inmost feelings to its outmost ongoings, must be subdued to Christ. Personal sanctity, which dreads a blot upon itself, as it dreads the anger of God; love for the Church of Christ, which many waters of strife cannot quench, nor floods drown; with labors, wise, earnest, self-denying, and abundant, for the souls of perishing men; all these must we lay as a cheerful tribute at the feet of the King of kings.

IV

THE SECRET THINGS OF GOD

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"The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us, and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law."—DEUTERONOMY xxix. 29.

IN going through the Sinaitic Peninsula, I saw nothing more touching than the burial-places of the poor Bedouin. Enclosed by no wall, shaded by no tree, the graves are dug out of the coarse gravel, hardly furrowing the desert, marked only by small, rude stones, and left to be guarded and watched only by the mountains and the stars.

Such had been the burial of more than two millions of Hebrews, who went up out of Egypt under the leadership of Moses. Besides himself, only Caleb and Joshua survived. In forty years a whole nation had gone and come. Instead of the parents were the children; children born in the desert.

And now the new nation are encamped amongst the mountains of Moab, getting ready to cross the Jordan, and conquer their promised inheritance. Moses will not go with them. He and they are about to part company forever. He had been Lawgiver and Prophet. And in this the last month of his eventful life the spirit of both these offices is remarkably strong upon him. Sinai burns and thunders again in his

stately periods, as he repeats the Divine Commandments; and his eye kindles with the glowing visions of prophecy. With tremendous power he rallies these children of the desert to their duty, painting on the sky before them, in gigantic outline, the mercies and judgments that are to come;—mercies, if they are loyal; judgments, if they rebel.

And yet there is great reserve. The curtain that hides the future is not withdrawn, but only lifted for a moment at the corner. Precisely what is coming, the people are not to know. It is enough for them that they know their duty. "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us, and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law."

The maxim thus propounded by the great Hebrew Lawgiver was not exclusively for the Hebrew people. It is good for all nations, for all ages, and covers the entire domain of faith. It concerns the whole economy of revelation. Of everything religious, every fact, every doctrine, every duty, is it true that God keeps back a part of His counsel and purpose, revealing so much, and only so much as may be needful in order to obedience. To illustrate and enforce this maxim, by pointing out some of the more obvious and vital of its applications and uses, is now my purpose.

I. Let us begin with God Himself.

The doctrine of the Divine existence, if put to popular vote the world over, would be pronounced impregnable. Plato was right in calling atheism a *disease*. The human intellect in its normal, healthy action holds

it for certain, that there is a Great Being over us, invisible, infinite, ineffable, but of real, solid personality, who made and governs us, who made and governs all things. Napoleon, on the deck of his frigate, one night in the Mediterranean, sailing homewards from Egypt, uttered only the general sentiment of humanity, when he put to shame the atheism of his suite of officers by tossing his hand towards the stars, demanding to know, "Who made all those?"

And yet when we come to ask for an *a priori* demonstration, when we would make it certain to ourselves, that there is a personal God, in the same sense and to the same degree that we are certain of some mathematical propositions, our logic is not triumphant. Anselm, who first tried his hand at this high argument, was confronted by Gaunilo, as Descartes and Leibnitz have more recently been confronted by Kant, who pronounces the splendid attempt an utter failure. Philosophy is thus divided against herself in this matter, while the popular judgment is wholly bewildered and baffled by a process of argumentation so refined and subtle. From which it appears that God has somehow in a measure withdrawn and wrapt Himself away from the scrutiny of His finite creatures. No one of our five senses gives any report of Him; as we read that "no man hath seen God at any time." The cunning analysis of chemistry cannot touch Him. Neither telescope, searching amongst the stars, nor microscope, searching amongst the atoms, ever overtakes Him. Everywhere we encounter the shining footprints, but nowhere do we catch a glimpse of the glowing feet. The lifted heel flies on before us evermore. Strange

indeed, when we come to reflect upon it, that the meanest of all the works of God are allowed to impress and register themselves upon us, thronging the several avenues of sense, while God Himself, the grandest reality of all, and the root and support of all, stands veiled and silent. Stranger still, that this high faculty of abstract thought, this wonderful power of speculation which grasps and subdues the universe beneath its categories, should do no more for us in this problem of the Divine existence. But so it is. The absolute and eternal I Am will not surrender Himself to our searching. It is the choice of God to draw back, as it were, from His earthly creatures, and stay concealed.

To the question, therefore, whether atheism be possible? we must answer that no doubt it is. We have only to require some sensible assurance, or some incontestable demonstration of the Divine existence, and our faith inevitably dies. God will take His leave of us. We shall soon see no footprint, and hear no rustling of Him.

That God might have made atheism absolutely impossible by an instant impression of Himself upon our minds, rendering Himself every whit as palpable to the spiritual vision as material objects are to the bodily vision, cannot be questioned. The human soul might have been so fashioned as to see God, just as our eyeballs see the sun in the firmament. Our intuitions, about which philosophy is still in doubt whether they give us not the absolute only, but also and equally the personality of the absolute, might surely have been so vivid and so peremptory as to leave no room for doubt. But such is not the established economy of things. Not

as the eagle gazes at the sun, gaze we on God. We are required rather to turn our backs upon this intolerable light, see it by reflection, and judge of all other objects, in their Divine relations, by the shadows which they cast. The three sources of proof on which mainly we rely to establish, for popular effect, the Divine existence and perfections are, accordingly, the material world around us, the moral world within us, and the general consent of men. Insufficient, doubtless, if counsel be taken of mental arrogance, and absolute scientific assurance be asked for; but altogether sufficient, if knowledge be pursued with reverent docility as the condition and gateway to holiness. Dark is the path of mere philosophic speculation, which the vulture's eye hath not seen; while the path of godly fear and holy obedience is flooded with heavenly light. Not amidst the noisy disputings of the academy, but in the sacred stillness of the temple, is God's voice heard. So that the process of proof itself becomes a discipline. We may be atheists if we will. Near as God is to every one of us, and accessible in prayer, He will not force Himself upon our reluctant convictions, and will not answer us unless we speak to Him in childlike simplicity.

So also in regard to the attributes of God. Various classifications of these attributes have been suggested by our scientific theologians, such, as active and passive, negative and positive, natural and moral, essential and personal, and it may seem, perhaps, as though we had gone a great way in our knowledge of the Infinite. But our ambitious terminology deceives us, our statements are all inadequate, and we have scarcely mastered

the alphabet of this august knowledge. What we call omnipotence, or omniscience, is very far from being comprehended by us. The difference between possessing some power and all power, between knowing some things and all things, is simply the difference between finite and infinite, for which we have found no measure and no expression. Still more perplexing are the so-called moral attributes of God, His justice, His benevolence and the like, between which and the poor reflections of them in our own disordered nature there is the further and yet more fatal difference that is born of sin.

When, therefore, we advance to that unique and crowning revelation which God has made of Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we need not stumble at it. There is, at any rate, no antecedent improbability to be vanquished. If the Unity of God be an affirmation of reason, supported equally by the constitution of nature and the courses of providence, there are also suggestions and echoes of the Trinity both around us and within us. In nature there are forms, forces, and processes strangely trinal, while man himself is best defined as body, soul, and spirit; and the simple act of self-consciousness, in its last analysis, is found to be a trinal act. And yet the Trinity, though agreeable to reason when once revealed, is no discovery of reason. Nor is it so revealed as a proud philosophy would have liked to have it. The Bible, on this subject as on every other, utterly ignores the scientific method. Even the Divine Unity, which was the great trust, the great conflict, and the great trophy of Judaism, is nowhere presented in a scholastic form, but always practically, in

its antagonism to the heathen idolatries. Insist, if you will, that the Trinity is not unfolded in the Scriptures as we unfold it in our creeds. What then? If it is therefore to be expelled from our symbols, many other doctrines must go out with it. Let us rather recognize the vital principle, that God in no case undertakes to reveal Himself in a way to satisfy the subtle exactions of philosophy. It is no metaphysical problem that He comes down to solve. Not as challenged by science, does He feel called upon to open the interior of His being. The mode of the Divine existence, whether as one, or three, might have been withheld as an eternal secret. But if ever revealed, we may be sure it has a practical side to it, and will be revealed only upon that side. God, we may well be confident, will tell us nothing about Himself, but what is available to make us better and to save our souls; to make us saints rather than to make us sages. Such, to the very letter, is the Trinity of the Scriptures; popular rather than scientific, practical rather than speculative, instrumental rather than absolute, coupled always with redemption. While therefore we look for no such proof-texts as our scientific theologians would have dictated, we are not to let our faith be perplexed or staggered by the lack of them. Such proof-texts are not needed; they would be suspicious rather. It is enough for us on the threshold of the Church to have been baptized into the Triune Name, to accept in Christ the Eternal Word made flesh, and look for sanctification to the strivings of the Holy Spirit. These are the necessary elements of our spiritual life; these, and these only, the revelations of God concerning Himself. The depths of the Divine

nature we have no need to fathom, if we might. The stupendous mysteries of the Triune existence are not submitted to our curiosity. They are among the secret things of God. But we are summoned to pay our reverence to a Divine Christ as our only sufficient Redeemer, and to find the whole might and majesty of the Eternal Godhead, in the sanctifying energies of the Spirit. So much has God revealed, and we must be content. An imperfect, hesitating faith will cripple us. We need not revere Athanasius as a man inspired, but the elements, out of which that finest brain of the fourth century elaborated the Nicene Creed, concern the deepest hidings of our life. Only these elements can give us hope and strength. They are the things revealed to make us wise unto life eternal.

II. Let us turn now in the second place to take note of man.

We pass here at one bound from the infinite to the finite. Philosophy asks for some bridge between them; but thus far always in vain. That there should be Divine Sovereignty is plain enough; and equally plain is it, that there should be human freedom. But the two united are an enigma. That God should hold everything within the grasp of His sublime designs, and let His eternal decrees superintend and shape all issues, is easily conceived of. Or that this sense of freedom within us is valid, and our deeds really our own, is also easily believed. Each of these convictions rests upon its own proper and sufficient basis. We cannot satisfy our intellects with any definition of God which fails to clothe Him with absolute sovereignty. Nor can we

satisfy our consciences but by admitting ourselves to be responsible, in the highest and fullest sense, for all we have done, and for all we are. But to let the Divine decrees stretch everywhere and hold all, embracing even these finite activities and this finite freedom as a part of their stupendous machinery, is more than we can master.

Again, the one fact which darkens all history, and perplexes all speculation, is the monstrous abuse of freedom in the apostasy of man. Dualism solves the problem at once by limiting the omnipotence of God. Pantheism solves the problem by eclipsing the holiness of God. The former declares that God could not, the latter declares He would not prevent the entrance of moral evil. And yet there stands towering before us this huge indisputable fact of sin. God is not dethroned, nor His sceptre shortened, nor His holiness eclipsed, and yet here is moral evil, which He must surely abhor, and has as surely permitted. The presence of sin is not to be denied. It has entered into all history, has plagued all men in all relations. The sages have all recognized it. Common men all feel it. And philosophy is dumb before it.

What now saith the Scripture? If there be no relief at all from the torture of this problem, no wrong is done us; for elsewhere certainly all is darkness. How then stands this matter of the Divine decrees? Obviously, they are everywhere calmly recognized, even in the face of all the moral derangements and discords of the universe. Their iron strength stiffens every part of the edifice. God sees the end from the beginning; else He were not omniscient. He follows a plan

in all His working; else He were not a wise architect. Nor is there any to stay His hand. In the armies of Heaven, and amongst the inhabitants of the earth, He doeth all His pleasure; else He were seated on a precarious throne. Sin is the abominable thing which His soul hates. He cannot therefore have begotten it; and yet He hath foreordained whatsoever cometh to pass. The human will was endowed with freedom, but it was the freedom of a finite creature, finding its circuits in the atmosphere of a Divine economy. Every man goes as it is written of him in the purposes of God. But the grand circumstance about these purposes is, that they are not divulged in advance of their accomplishment. Even prophecy is couched in such terms as to be fully intelligible only in the light of its own fulfilment. The pressure of the Bible is always not so much upon the intellect as the will. Human freedom is not so much asserted as assumed. The idea of proving it seems never to have entered the mind of any inspired writer. Nor is any attempt ever made to reconcile the two activities of God and man. Had such a reconciliation been necessary, God would certainly have suggested it. But now it lies back in the darkness, and we must consent to leave it there. It is one of the secret things belonging unto the Lord our God. The things revealed are the facts themselves unreconciled; on the one side, a Divine efficiency, which seems to clasp the universe as with iron arms, on the other side, a human freedom which seems to threaten riot and anarchy. These two elements we must accept, and hold them together as we can; denying neither, and abating the force of neither; holding to the Divine

efficiency without flinching, making our faith stout and masculine with it, having no fear of being charged with fatalism; holding equally to human accountability, making our faith elastic and agile with it, having no fear of being called Arminians. And as to the harmony between them, let us despair of finding it in this world. Let us rather leave it, and leave it cheerfully, till we stand on higher summits, in a clearer light. For the present let us care only that God be honored, and our own destiny happily accomplished. If God only is great, man surely is responsible. Finite personality in the face of such an Infinite may be a puzzle to us, but still there remains the fact. Before us, on the one hand, stands the solid buttress of God's sovereignty, the deep foundations of it out of sight. Before us, on the other hand, stands the solid buttress of human freedom, its deep foundations also out of sight. While upon and above them springs away the arch, whose key-stone is above the clouds.

And then as to that other fact of sin, we must respect the silence of the Scriptures. They do but report the fact; they nowhere undertake a solution of it. In the mind of God, the birth of moral evil no doubt lies clear. It is no painful mystery, still less a disastrous defeat, casting a shadow athwart His eternal blessedness. The permission of it, whatever that permission may have been, does not clash with His infinite holiness and grace. But He reveals nothing of the matter. Serious thinkers of all ages have encountered this problem of moral evil only to be baffled by it. They have reached no satisfactory solution of it. The only final answer, in which the mind can rest, is the answer of

faith, which confesses *it does not know.* The origin of evil is one of those secret things which belong unto the Lord our God. To stumble at it is simply preposterous, since it is not a theory, but a fact. To make the mystery of its origin, or the silent, swift contagion of it, or the terrible power of it, an excuse for the continuance in the practice of it, is an insult to human reason. The thing revealed is the terrible fact of sin smiting all our hearts, and darkening all our lives. It matters not how it got here; here it is, a hateful tyranny, a fatal malady, in us like a pulse, gnawing like a poison, and we had as well deny our human brotherhood as deny our guilt.

III. It remains for us to consider now, in the third place, the new relation of grace which has been established between God and man.

From sin we pass on to redemption as the great radiant centre not less of all knowledge than of all hope. If the Scriptures reveal no speculative solution of the mystery of evil, they do yet propound a practical solution of it in the proffered deliverance of men from its power and curse. And yet this deliverance opens up yet other mysteries, and at every point we come across these secret things of God, which belong unto Him and not to us or our children.

Human philosophy in its pride and self-reliance comes along discoursing of culture. It understands a change of purpose accomplished by moral suasion. It comprehends what is meant by a moral improvement and progress. It believes in growing better. But it has no conception of that radical transformation of

character by the Spirit of God, which is described as the new birth, the passing from death unto life, Christ in us the hope of glory. Speech of such things sounds fanatical. "How *can* a man be born when he is old?" And the answer of revelation leaves every Nicodemus just where it finds him. These things of the Spirit are inexplicable to him, neither can he know them by any exposition addressed only to his understanding. The new birth is a stupendous mystery of life, which can be known only by being experienced. It is a mystery in advance of its accomplishment, demanding of us the docility of children in submitting to the process divinely ordained for us. It is a mystery even after its accomplishment. For always will it be a matter of grateful wonder to the Christian, how the Spirit of all grace ever forced, and yet so gently, the fastenings of his bosom, and wrought there so efficiently and yet so sweetly its saving work. Verily the Lord was within us, though we were but half awake to His glory. While all along at every point there presses ever the old perplexity, how it is that God can work within us both to will and to do, and we all the while be working out our own salvation. On the one hand, it is plain that no new faculty is given. It is equally plain that there has been something deeper than moral suasion. But precisely what it is that has befallen us, we cannot say. We can only say that whereas once we were blind, now we see; and we praise, not the Pool of Siloam, in which we washed, but Jesus of Nazareth, who told us what to do.

Now, if the experience within us be such a mystery, much more the Divine secret and basis of it. "If I

have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?"[1] If the renewed heart be such a marvel to us, much more that great sacrifice which has paved its way. If Jesus was only a man, we understand very well the whole meaning of His death: it was only a martyrdom. But if He was, as the Scriptures assure us, God manifest in the flesh, the Eternal Word, the image of the invisible God, then have we a heavenly mystery answering to the earthly. Not that we can sound the hidden depths of His august person, so running the line of boundary between His natures, as to dare to say that only the human nature suffered for our sins; still the mighty work accomplished within us compels us to an exalted faith in the mighty work accomplished for us in that tasting of death for every man. As to an understanding of that agony in the garden and upon the cross, as we understand some human agony, we utterly despair of it. If we hesitate to call it Divine suffering, still less dare we pronounce it only human. The piercing accents of that dying cry, the darkened heavens and the shuddering earth, all move us to fall prostrate and adore.

Consider the revelations of Scripture in regard to the future life. Definite and comforting beyond all the guesses of unaided reason; and yet, as compared with what we sometimes pine to know, how meagre. Of the disembodied state, into which we enter at death and remain till the Resurrection, almost nothing has been revealed. Retribution, if not in its fullest measure, yet most surely in the beginning of it, appears to come at once. For we read in the Epistle to the He-

[1] John iii. 12.

brews that it is appointed unto men once, and only once, to die, but after this the judgment.[1] We catch a glimpse of Lazarus reclining at the banquet with Abraham; Paradise is promised to the penitent malefactor; the dying Stephen sees Christ standing to receive him; Paul expects to be with Christ. But where the dead saints now are, how they live disembodied, and what their relations may be to the kingdom of Christ in its conflicts and triumphs, it is not given us to know. Are they far away on some peaceful shore awaiting the morning of the Resurrection? Or are they round about us in the sky, a cloud of witnesses, filling the very air we breathe, though we perceive it not, with the music of their anthems and their prayers? These are questions not very distinctly answered for us in the Scriptures. Nor yet do the Scriptures tell us much about the Resurrection and what follows it. We inquire with eagerness, "With what body do they come?" Revelation answers back, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be."[2] The Seer of Patmos has indeed disclosed the splendors of the New Jerusalem, opening its pearly gates and marshalling its shining hosts; but the gorgeous imagery is a veil as well as a mirror of the world to come. How much is merely costume, none can tell. The locality of the ransomed and re-embodied Church is still a question. That we shall be somewhere with Christ, and, like Him, sinless, the moment we have died, and then in the Resurrection that we shall be still more like Him in our re-embodied state, carried up to loftier heights of blessedness: this is nearly all we know about the life that awaits us beyond the grave.

[1] Heb. ix. 27. [2] 1 John iii. 2.

So also of the life that now is in its duties and its discipline. The great human duties are *Prayer* and *Work:* Prayer for every needed blessing, and Work to realize it; Prayer, as though God must do the whole, and Work, as though we must do it all ourselves. These are the two poles of the great galvanic battery. But who that waits to know the philosophy of answered prayer will ever pray? And who that waits to be sure there shall be no mistake, will ever work? The hand that beckons us to glory waves at us out of impenetrable clouds. We walk in a way that we know not. We labor for our Master, but never know beforehand which shall prosper, whether this or that. We lay wise plans, and they miscarry. We commit gross blunders, and they are overruled for good. We run towards the light, and it goes out in darkness. We sink shivering into the darkness, and find it light. We pray for joys, and they mildew into griefs. We accept the griefs, and they blossom into joys. To-day the apple turns to ashes, and to-morrow the stones to bread. We exult in some prosperity, and get leanness with it. We murmur at some adversity, and find it big with blessings. We run towards open doors, and dash our heads against a granite wall. We move against that wall at the call of duty, and it opens to let us through. The lines of our lives are all in God's hands. What shall befall us, we cannot know. What is expedient, we cannot tell. Only this we know, that God would shape us to Himself, whether it be by the discipline of joy, or the discipline of sorrow. To make us perfect as He is perfect, this is the choice of our Heavenly Father, this the end of all His revelations; while everything not help-

ful to this He hides away out of our sight. Verily, "the secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed, belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law." Partial revelation, then, is the method, and obedience the end.

In the practicable application and improvement of our subject, it may be remarked:

1. First of all, we are taught a lesson of humility, and that, too, at the very point where we most need it. There is no pride on earth like the pride of intellect and science. A modest confession of ignorance is the ripest and last attainment of philosophy. But child-like docility is of the very essence of religion, required of us all at the very threshold of our Christian experience. And in order to this, no better discipline could be imagined than the discipline to which we are actually subjected under the existing economy of revelation. The secret things do so vastly outnumber the things which are revealed! The greater portion of all our inquiries and all our reasonings must always have for their issue: "Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Thy sight."[1]

2. We may learn to distinguish the more vital articles of our faith. Controversy is apt to rage the hottest about the subordinate points. But the stress of revelation is on the grand essentials. The very design of the Book necessitates this feature. What the Bible is fullest of is therefore of course most vital. If sin and the woe it merits; if redemption by the blood of Christ, and sanctification by the indwelling Spirit; if the Res-

[1] Matt. xi. 26.

urrection and the final Judgment; if Heaven and Hell are what throb and resound throughout the Sacred Volume, then these are the doctrines of the standing or falling Church, since they are the doctrines of a living or dying soul.

3. And finally, our shortest way to the end of doubt and controversy, is by the path of an humble obedience. If a man be intellectually prurient and captious, he may keep on disputing forever; for religious truth, touch what points of it you will, has always to do with the being and government of God, and is of course illimitable in its reach. The Divine existence and decrees; sin and redemption; the incarnation and atonement; salvation by grace, and assured perseverance in the Divine life, are all of them above and beyond our science. And if we insist upon a complete speculative solution of them, we shall never be satisfied. As to these cardinal doctrines of our faith, we must make up our minds in advance to have unrenewed man find fault with them. And our aim must be, not to trim and temper them, but to point and crowd them rather, with all their rousing power, upon the *hearts* of men. We must take men in hand as rebels, and labor not so much to rectify their opinions, as to have them reconciled to God.

As for the orthodoxy of the Church, without despising or disparaging the office of scientific theology, we must yet trust more to grace than to logic in our endeavors to hold men to the profounder and sterner teachings of the Bible. When we come to see ourselves as we are, enslaved by sin, and in peril of perishing forever, there is little danger but we shall be ortho-

dox enough. We shall feel ourselves to be in need of an eternal purpose of redemption, in need of an infinite Saviour, in need of an almighty grace; and this need of an eternal purpose, this need of an infinite Saviour, this need of an almighty Grace, shall be their triumphant demonstration.

V

FROM BLINDNESS TO VISION

FROM BLINDNESS TO VISION

"And Jesus said, For judgment came I into this world, that they who see not may see, and that they who see may become blind."—JOHN ix. 39.

MILTON was forty-six years old when he became blind, carrying with him into that blindness of twenty years, endless galleries of remembered visions: vivid pictures of land and sea and sky, of golden days and starry nights, of storm and calm, of wife and children. But this poor blind man of Jerusalem, in the ninth chapter of John's Gospel, was born blind. All his life he had never once seen his mother's face. Now all at once he sees his mother's face, sees his father, whom very likely he less cared to see, sees the neighbors who had been in the habit of speaking kindly to him in the street, sees the grand new Temple of Herod of which he had heard so much, sees the slope of Olivet dotted over with trees, sees the bright blue sky, sees the singing birds. Look at him going about with a new kind of springy movement, stopping every now and then to gaze, and to gaze again. You and I will never know just how glad and grateful that man was. Jesus had cured a great many blind people in Galilee, in Judea, in Decapolis, people that had become blind in that scorching climate; but never before had He cured any one born blind. That

was a very great miracle, from natural, born blindness to instant and perfect vision. But underneath it there was another miracle, far greater, from spiritual blindness to spiritual vision: of which I propose to speak to-day.

I. The Blindness.

This imputation of blindness, implied in the language of our text, was proudly enough resented by some at least of the Pharisees who heard it. "Are *we* blind also?" Certainly they were. But how? and why? Were they worse off than the average of mankind? Or are we only all alike born blind? Every son of Adam, and every daughter of Adam, all the way down, from first to last? Let none of us resent this question to-day. Offended dignity looks always very foolish, confronting facts. What are the facts?

In this conversation between Jesus and the Pharisees, the conversation that followed the miracle, blindness is of course a figure of speech: as when, on another occasion, the Pharisees were called "blind leaders of the blind."[1]

Paralysis is another figure, as when Jesus says, "No man *can* come to Me except the Father that sent Me draw him";[2] and Paul says, "To will is present with me, but to *do* that which is good, is not."[3] And death is another figure of speech, still more sweeping: as when Jesus said that the dead even then were hearing the voice of the Son of God;[4] and Paul reminded the

[1] Matt. xv. 14.
[2] John vi. 44.
[3] Rom. vii. 18.
[4] John v. 25.

Ephesians that once they "were dead in trespasses and sins."[1] Literal blindness, literal paralysis, literal death, are not to be thought of for a moment; nor any other sort of blindness, or paralysis, or death, that cannot be helped.

Now these three bold images of blindness, paralysis, and death, are only so many instances and illustrations of linguistic law. Human speech is figurative throughout. In every language, terms now the most abstract, may be traced back to a concrete, physical root. In our own language, for example, right is simply straightness; wrong is crookedness; spirit is breath; eternity is only time with its boundaries removed, behind and before; sin is damage; remorse is a gnawing; holiness is haleness, or soundness; even God, though possibly the Anglo-Saxon for good, is quite as likely to be only the Sanskrit name for ruler.

Physical science has an immense advantage in this physical origin of language, working always with its own proper tools. And it goes hard always with metaphysical science—mental, moral, or religious, working with tools not properly, because not exclusively, its own. Full justice can never be done to spiritual facts, of whatever kind. The facts are too fine, some of them, or too lofty, or too profound. After awhile the facts are obscured, dwarfed, impoverished. Human language betrays its ignobleness of birth; and great truths are not safe in its keeping. It belittles and betrays them.

Undulation appears to be the law all around: in the light of suns; in the lift of seas; in the human heart-

[1] Eph. ii. 1.

throb; in the historic eras. Spiritual life pre-eminently comes and goes in great tidal waves. Grand ideas and enthusiasms struggle for utterance. They are in the air, and in the blood. Whole peoples are inspired and transfigured; whole generations become heroic. At first nobody thinks, or seems to think, how utterly inadequate the utterance is. By and by, the inadequate utterance begins to react. Experience sinks to the level of its expression. Worship, that rolled along the aisles, becomes empty reverberation among the arches. Belief, ceasing to grow, shuts itself up in articles. Heroes are born no more; nor saints; nor sages. The Scribe and the Pharisee have come. It is a poor, dry, hard, scholastic age. We are between the waves. Such is Church History, over and over again.

The last great tidal surge was the Protestant Reformation, lifting Europe grandly toward the stars; lifting also America, which was then in Europe. But how soon this Reformation sank and swirled away into mere dry dogma and a new tradition. And at length the Sadducees have come. They were sure to come. They are never far behind the Scribes and Pharisees. Doubt is now the malaria, in the air again, and in the blood: doubt concerning not merely here and there a religious doctrine, which might have been articulated better, and will be some day, but concerning the very root and substance of all religion—the personality of God, and the immortality of Man. Are we, then, to have no religion any more? But only hard, natural law, grinding like a mill? So the blind men say.

But sensible Christians have no reason to be alarmed or discouraged. Our present civilization, dating from

the inventions and discoveries of the fifteenth century, had Protestant baptism, to be sure, but has been running wild since that. This civilization was, first of all, distinctly commercial, then industrial, and, of course, intensely realistic throughout. Its philosophy is formulated at last, and now we understand the problem. Our way is not backward, into Egypt, and the old traditions; but onward to Sinai, with pillar of cloud and fire. Christianity is safe enough, if only we have found out what Christianity really is. But these Christian sects, I should say, had better be letting one another alone. We are not fighting now for the Trinity, nor for the Divine Decrees, nor for Final Perseverance, but only for religion as our common human inheritance and concern; as England fought at Waterloo, not for herself only, but for Europe. To-day we are safe in asking for nothing but the solitary fact of self-impeachment at the bar of Conscience. Concede us this, confess this to ourselves, and if logic survives the malaria, it will be plain enough that there must be a personal God to take care of us.

We may, or we may not, have been immoral. That depends very much upon our standard. Our scientific friends must excuse the catechising. Definitions are always in order, and they will please tell us what they mean by morality? Plato meant something very fine by it. And morality ought now to mean, for one thing at the lowest, that our finer rational nature has never gone down in shame under the beastly tread of sensual appetite and passion. Has it never? Let each man answer for himself. Morality ought to mean, for another thing, that never, in any relation, have we in any

way or degree, wronged or injured any human being; that we have never taken the slightest advantage unfairly of anybody, in commercial competition, in social rivalry, in politics; that we have never overpraised an ally, nor underpraised a rival. Have we never? Let each man answer this question also for himself. And then again, morality ought to mean—morality of the finer, Platonic sort, that we have not been conceited, supercilious, haughty, scornful; nor self-willed and self-asserting, right and left. How is that? But omitting all details, we have a tolerably distinct idea of what it is to be really fine and chivalric in character, every chamber open, every corner clean. Tell me frankly, any man that hears me, have you had no thought to-day, no thought these ten days back, of which you are now ashamed? No matter how it may be with other people, worse or better than yourself. How is it with you? And no matter about the genesis, or the antecedents of our present moral state. What is that state? Does it satisfy us? Are we willing to have it permanent? What have we to say about keeping company with ourselves, as we now are, forever? And what have we to say about the company that possibly may thrust itself upon us in some other world? Not the very vilest, who might keep far away; but people that we have wronged, or who think we have wronged them; selfish, surly, overbearing people, whom we thoroughly dislike; mean, treacherous people, whom we utterly detest. Who knows what may be? The possibilities are torturing.

From such moral judgments and apprehensions, Kant has reasoned to a moral Judge. Self-conscious personal-

ity for ourselves, requires self-conscious personality also for Him. It is, perhaps, a conclusion from a premiss; but it looks very much like an intuition, or an instinct. And so God moves in, august, omniscient, almighty, eternal, awfully holy, just, and good; but with not the slightest suggestion or hint of mercy. It is all work and wages, law and retribution. Nothing is ever forgotten, nothing dies, nothing changes. And perhaps there are no secrets any more; every spirit, that cares to do it, reading the very thoughts of every other. What say we to such companionship, and such conditions of existence, to-morrow and forever? Philosophers are plenty—physical and metaphysical. Ask them to show us the way out and up. They cannot. They are blind. And so are we.

II. The Vision.

Ethical law is as blind as gravitation. Vision must therefore be religious. Religion implies revelation. Revelation implies personal concern of the Infinite for the finite; paternal relationship, affection, and care; the possibility of something better for us than we deserve. In this universe of law—universe not of light only, but of lightning, is there any chance at all for a man who feels the need of being treated a great deal better, infinitely better, than he deserves to be? When this burning question begins to be answered to any purpose, our blind men begin to see.

Of the nine great historic religions, with which Christianity is sometimes compared, excluding Confucianism, which is not so much a religion as a morality,

four are dead: The Egyptian, Greek, Roman, and Scandinavian. Of the two that are related to Christianity somewhat as parent and child, Judaism has been superseded by Christianity, and Mohammedanism has failed in its attempt to supersede the superseder. There remain only Brahmanism, Zoroastrianism, and Buddhism, not one of which has ever dreamed of conquering the Occident. Christianity is alone in its ambition, its purpose, and its expectation, of universal dominion. If any one really believes, or is really afraid, that Christianity is now at last, in its turn, decadent, let him only put his ear to the ground, and hear the tramp of the legions. The skirmishes are frequently disastrous to us, but the great battles all go one way. Mankind must have a religion, and will have the best.

What is Christianity? This question is put and pressed to-day as never before. And sectarian answers are behind the time. No Creed of Orient, or Occident, ancient or modern, has spoken the final word. Scientific theology has still its errand and its rights, though the more we refine, the more we differ. The time will come, when the more we differ, the better we shall be agreed: differing in the smaller, agreeing in the larger, things; far apart in the spreading branches, knit together in the sturdy trunk. For the rank and file of the marching, fighting, conquering host, the oldest of all Creeds is still the best; Apostolic in its elements and spirit, though not in form: I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth: and in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was Crucified, Dead, and

Buried: He descended into Hell, the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into Heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Catholic Church; the Communion of Saints; the Forgiveness of sins; the Resurrection of the body; and the Life everlasting. Amen. With the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the Apostolic Benediction, this Creed of Creeds might well be made a part of every Sunday Service. Would it were also the only doctrinal test of fitness for admission to any Church; that so at length, when Christendom is older, wiser, and better, it may become the basis of intercommunion among all the Churches, of every name.

In speculation, as I consider the deeper problems of life and history, Christianity amazes, fascinates, and satisfies me more and more. Its recognition of the antiquity and power of evil, its revelation of atonement within the bosom of the Godhead, its conquering love and pity, its regenerating grace, inspiring the hope of a golden age to come, compel me into wonder and worship. My whole rational nature blesses God for it as a philosophy. Pillar of cloud by day, pillar of fire by night, it guides me through the desert. But when I would know more precisely and practically, just what Christianity is in its last analysis, and where is the hiding of its wonderful power, I must forget my philosophy, forget my theology, forget even the Apostles' Creed, and make a careful study of what passed in Jerusalem between Jesus and the man born blind.

It does not appear that the man himself had asked

to be cured of his blindness. Natural, born blindness was of course incurable, as they all supposed. The disciples of Jesus were simply inquiring who had sinned, this man, or his parents, that he was thus born blind. The answer was far deeper than, perhaps, it seems. For no particular sin of his or theirs had the blindness come, but as a part of the Divine economy, including evil, to conquer it: "that the works of God should be made manifest in him."[1] Good out of evil is better than original good; sight restored, better than sight inherited; saints at last judging angels. "I am the light of the world,"[2] said Jesus, with an accent which must have thrilled the blind man through and through. Then his eyes were anointed, on that memorable Sabbath Day, and he went to wash in Siloam, expecting to be cured. It was faith, instantaneous and absolute. And his eyes were opened. Then came the sharp colloquy between him and the Pharisees; they denouncing the Galilean as a Sabbath-breaker, he calling Him a Prophet. So this cured blind man became a disciple before he knew it, and then a confessor as soon as a disciple; for he was cast out of the Synagogue, the first man in our Christian history that ever suffered for his faith, the first of the confessors, as Stephen, some seven years later, was the first of the martyrs, heading the one procession, as Stephen headed the other. And Jesus, who came afterwards in vision to the dying martyr, came now in person to the living confessor. "Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and finding him, He said—" what? The Catechism was shorter than ours, question and answer: "Dost thou believe on the

[1] John ix. 3. [2] v. 5.

Son of God?" "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe on Him?" "Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that speaketh with thee." "Lord, I believe."[1] And instantly he worshipped, accepting Divine guidance, and submitting to Divine authority, in the person of the Galilean Prophet. That was all: just two steps out of darkness into light. The miracle accredited the Prophet; and the Prophet told the blind man who He was. What followed? Belief, Worship, and Obedience. The Creed short, but no end to the obedience. Prompt, implicit obedience to orders, sealed orders, is what it comes to at last. March, battle, bivouac: there is nothing to choose. No mad Balaklava charge is ever ordered. But were it ordered, horse and rider would obey alike:

"Not theirs to ask the reason why."

Christianity, thus practically apprehended, is the simplest thing in the world. From our Shorter Catechism, from our Nicene Creed, from the Apostles' Creed, we have only to go back to Christ's own Creed. Dost thou believe in the Son of God? Yes? or No?

Whether Yes, or No, what then? The answer is not mine, but Christ's: For judgment came I unto this world, that they who see not, may see; and that they who see, or think they see, may become blind. Blindness and vision shall be reversed; darkness and light; mountains and valleys. The humble shall be exalted, the proud abased. The Publican shall have his prayer answered quicker than an echo; the prayer of the Pharisee shall lose its way in the vacant air.

[1] John ix. 35–37.

Choose for yourselves, my scientific friends. There is only one thing for me to do. The Law is written on my conscience in lines of fire. In the garish day, the lines are dull. But in the twilight that follows the garish day, as I sit musing alone, the lines redden, and I am sad. I look out towards the stars, into those awful spaces, and there is no relief. That He who made those stars and spaces, can do no wrong, gives me no comfort, but only disturbs me the more. I am not in harmony with the Maker of the stars and spaces. I am not living up to my own ideal of character. Job's question to Bildad is a question only in form: How *should* man be just with God![1] the thing is utterly impossible. First of all, I must be forgiven; I must know that God utterly and squarely forgives, loves and pities me. I must get back sore-footed, and sore-hearted, into the old home, out of which I went as a gay and foolish prodigal. And I must go back to the old obedience and service. Who shows me the way? I cannot see. I only grope and stagger. But a voice I hear, such as was never heard before, such as shall never be heard again: "Follow Me. Do just what I tell you to do, to-day, to-morrow, and still to-morrow, till your way-worn feet are planted on the crystal sea."

[1] Job ix. 2.

VI

THE DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF CHRISTIANITY

THE DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF CHRISTIANITY[1]

"For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ."—ROMANS i. 16.

WHETHER religion in general has any rational ground or not, it is certain that human society in the long run is quite impossible without religion. Even if religion were altogether a superstition, it is an inevitable and an indispensable superstition. Mankind will have to choose for themselves between the kinds of religion, just as they will have to choose between the kinds of civil government. And as human beings multiply, as the continents and islands get crowded more and more, this necessity will become only more and more pronounced and imperative. Nothing is surer than a Day of Judgment, somewhere and somewhen.

You have heard of the ten great religions of the world. Of these only three have been expansive and conquering religions. These three are Buddhism, Mohammedanism, and Christianity. To these three the struggle is narrowed down. And as between the three, whether legitimately or illegitimately, the hard, historic fact is, that Christianity is certainly carrying the day.

[1] Delivered at the installation of Dr. Charles H. Parkhurst over the Madison Square Presbyterian Church, New York, March 9, 1880.

But what is Christianity? What are its constituent elements, its essential features, by which it may be distinguished from other religions; and by which it must be judged, getting its final verdict either to go or stay?

I. I name as the first distinctive feature of Christianity, *The Incarnation of God in Christ.*

If history teaches anything, it teaches that human nature cannot endure a bald spiritual theism. We have two thoughts of God, equally normal and necessary. We think of Him as an Infinite Spirit, wholly separate from matter, and superior to it, without form, or voice, or vicissitude, transcending the limitations of space and time, wise, just, and awful in His holiness. Hence the pure monotheism now recognized as lying in the background of all the better mythologies. Hence, in part, the swift victories of Mohammed, whose wild voice out of the Arabian Peninsula went ringing over three apostate continents: "Your God is one God." Hence the fresh unfaded crown of Plato, who looked Greek Polytheism boldly in the face.

But human weakness, and, above all, human depravity necessitate another conception of God. Across this tremendous gulf between the finite and the infinite, between conscious guilt and the holiness that is cleaner than sky, or light, or lightning, the voice of man is afraid to speak. God Himself must come across this gulf. Hence the theophanies, one and all, Patriarchal and Jewish, in which the ineffable Jehovah now and then takes form and voice. Hence, likewise, in sorry fashion, the Heathen deification of nature and of man, bridging, or trying to bridge, this same bottomless

abyss. The idea of incarnation is thus proved to be instinctive. And yet it was never completely realized. The Patriarchal and Jewish theophanies were only transient manifestations of God to men; forms that vanished quickly, and voices that were quickly hushed; a temporary expedient of rudimental and provisional economies. They only abated a hunger, they could not satisfy. But they served their purpose: they prevented at once the worship of nature, and the multiplication of inferior divinities. Outside of Judaism, however, the declension at last was monstrous. The Creator was lost sight of in His creation. The symbol itself was worshipped. In the great hunger of the human heart for an Incarnate God, polytheism became the faith of the masses, and pantheism the speculation of the schools. Human reason pronounces for unity in its conception of God. But the human heart, yearning for sympathy in its weakness, and stricken with terror in its defilement, cries out passionately for an Incarnate God.

Call it reason and conscience, or call it finite limitation and guilty fear, this uniform, intense, importunate demand for an Incarnate God is answered now at last, and answered only, by our God in Christ. The old theophanies were as transient as the flush of morning, or the pomp and glory of sunset clouds. The heathen incarnations were pantheistic. In heathen philosophies, God entered humanity only as He entered the forms and forces of nature. The stone, the tree, the fish, the reptile, the bird, the beast, the man, fared just alike. There was no proper personal union expressed in personal self-consciousness; but only an impersonal pres-

ence, as of light in the crystal, as of heat in the sunbeam. But in Christ, with the natures distinctly two, the person is absolutely one. And so the incessant paradox. In one breath we say of Him, He was born and died. In the next breath we say of Him, "Before Abraham was, He is." Babe, boy, man, martyr; and yet God manifest in the flesh. And for three and thirty years, nearly nineteen hundred years ago, this mysterious being was in Palestine; as much at home there as John or Caiaphas. Now He sailed upon the lake, asleep like a weary fisherman; and now He smoothed the tossing billows by a word. Now He was a wedding guest; and now He turned the water into wine. Now He wept for Lazarus; and now He called him back out of the silent depths. Now He died Himself; conquering death for Himself, and for us all. At Bethlehem His winged feet first touched this shore of time; from Olivet they sprang back into the eternal home.

Such is the Christ of the New Testament, from Gospel to Apocalypse. Such was the Christ of Christendom, in its instinctive faith, for all those three hundred years which waited for the Nicene Creed. Such, in steady, solid cadence has been the confession of all the centuries from then till now. Here at last we rest. The great hunger is appeased. We can accept no less. We can ask no more. God in Christ is the crown of all our thinking, the end of all our desires, the solace of all our sorrows, the conquest of all our fears. God Triune in eternity; God manifest in time: how Socrates would have wept for joy, had he seen this vision. Probably he sees it now. Thank God, we see

it, and philosophy sees it more and more clearly from age to age. From patheistic speculations, our only logical escape is in this doctrine of the Word made flesh. Here the sage and the savage meet. The conception of such a Divine Humanity is equally beyond them both; but as an accomplished historic fact it satisfies and saves them both.

II. The second distinctive feature of Christianity is *Atonement.*

Both Testaments are full of it. If, as a Roman poet has said, it be human to err, equally human are remorse and fear. Dualism, which affirms the independent eternity of evil, is a crude and childish philosophy. Conscience spurns it. In man's sober and honest judgment of himself, he is an offender, not merely against the moral order of the world, whatever that may be, but against an Infinite Moral Personality. Punishment is our instinctive apprehension. Nature, we see, always punishes, never pardons, an offender. Fire burns, water drowns, always. Human governments find it unsafe to pardon. History, logic, psychology are all against it. Can God pardon? Plato says He cannot. But Plato did not know God as we do. The Tri-unity of God, he only guessed. John's description, definition perhaps, "God is *Love*," Plato could not have guessed. I will not say that human beings would never have dared to dream that God might somehow relieve the agony of guilty fear. But no prudent thinker surely would ever venture to reason from goodness to mercy. That God so loved the world as to suffer from Himself, unto Himself, within Himself, for the world's redemption,

is one of the stupendous, awful secrets of the Unseen Realm. Atonement is eternal. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain; slain from the foundation of the world.

Moral evil, of course, perplexes, confounds, staggers us. But I read in our catechism that God has "unchangeably foreordained whatsoever comes to pass in time." And Descartes teaches exactly the same doctrine. I am not afraid to side with God, and take my chance with His attributes of justice and mercy. If only I am conscious of hating sin, as I am sure God hates it, I know I am safe; safe always, safe anywhere. The black cloud is emptied of its wrath. The fiery bolt has sunk, hissing, but quenched, into the bosom of God Himself. Debt cancelled, anger appeased, Satan routed, Death and Hell conquered: call these metaphors, if you will; they are infinitely short of the reality.

In Gethsemane, under the olive-trees, under the full-orbed Paschal moon, I see the bloody sweat, and I hear the cry, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful," and I am not afraid to say, that God has suffered for my sin, and suffers still. My trust is in the Lamb slain before the morning stars sang together.

III. The third distinctive feature of Christianity is *Regeneration.*

Confession of sin is not confined to Christendom. Universal sacrifice is universal confession. It is in all literatures, even in that of China, the coldest and poorest. In the better, profounder literatures, as of Greece

and Rome, this confession also is profound and searching. "It is clear," says Aristotle in his Nicomachean Ethics, "that not one of the moral virtues springs up in us by nature." "We all have sinned," says Seneca, "some more, others less." Paul goes no farther than this when he says, we are "by nature the children of wrath."

It was not the fact, but only the genesis of moral evil, about which the ancient philosophers were at fault. Assuming a better original estate, they explained our present character by supposing a gradual degeneracy: the successive ages of gold, of silver, of brass, and of iron. As Coleridge observes, "They had no notion of a *fall* of man." Of course they could conceive of no adequate remedy.

And yet near the end of a dialogue *Respecting Virtue*, Platonic in its spirit, though probably not rightly ascribed to Plato, we are told, that virtue is neither natural nor acquirable by study, but comes, if it come at all, by a Divine fate, without any purpose of our own, by which is meant, of course, any *originating* purpose of our own. Here at length is a sign-board pointing in the right direction.

Christianity begins its curative work by a better diagnosis of the disease. It sets in clear light the original rectitude of man, discloses the Tempter, and proclaims the Fall. Traducianism may or may not be true: who knows? But the race is one. The generations are knit closely together. Sour grapes sharpen the children's teeth. We are bad enough, no doubt. And bad things enough are in the air. But we forget sometimes this other fact, that good things also are in the air. The world is not heaved from its orbit into

boundless and dreary space. Its path is still star-lit, coming round in its majestic sweep. God in Christ is reconciling the world, forgiving sin. It was so in the early morning of history, when the shadows stretched afar, and the dew was heavy on the grass. It is just the same at high-noon to-day. Penitence is sure of pardon. No sad-eyed Magdalen, no broken-hearted Peter, no confessing brigand, shall find the door of mercy closed.

But let no man carelessly repeat his folly, and his sin. Grace is in the air to regenerate our souls. New creatures we know we ought to be. New purposes we need, and a new life. Persuasion to virtue was the task and function of the heathen moralist. The offer of God's regenerating grace is the task and function of the Christian evangelist. And there is that in us which will be satisfied with nothing less. We know what nature is, the old man in us all, pointing, drifting, dragging always downwards into sin and shame. Grace, we know, too, right well, is another mystery. We cannot make one hair white or black. We cannot add one pulse-beat to our allotted portion. Still less can we regenerate ourselves. By no direct volition can any hate be changed to love, or any love to hate. But this world was trodden by the feet of an Incarnate God. Its atmosphere is full of grace; and our lungs have only to take it in. Our palsied arms may obey the voice that is sounding all the time.

Such is our religion. Philosophy may well be proud of it. These three doctrines of Incarnation, Atonement, and Regeneration are all in the line of human reason, as seen in the light of history; and yet are in-

finitely beyond all human reason, as those know best who are best informed. Our religion transcends every other religion, our philosophy every other philosophy, by all the difference there is between a line touching only the clouds, and a line that touches the heart of God.

There is no mistaking this human instinct. There is no drowning this human outcry. What we want is an incarnate, reconciled, and regenerating God. Such a God, or none at all. In this last quarter of the nineteenth century no other choice is left us. Christianity, or Atheism: which shall it be? Civilization, or barbarism: which shall it be? The hour of plenty? or the trampled cornfield, and the bloody street?

VII

THE LAW OF SERVICE

THE LAW OF SERVICE

BACCALAUREATE[1]

"But whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister; and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all."—MARK X. 43, 44.

THE desire for distinction is one of the radical principles of our nature; never so crucified and buried but that, in unexpected ways and moments, it may revive, and rise again in power. In the world we find it, and in the Church. Charles the Fifth could lay off the imperial purple, but could not so easily dispossess himself of the imperial will. Simon Stylites on his pillar in the Lybian Desert, was as willing to draw crowds out after him as any most lordly Bishop of Alexandria. The decrepit anchorite, in spite of his austerities, was still a man; his stomach hungry for bread, his heart hungry for applause.

This subtle passion is strongest in the middle and more athletic period of life. It comes in between the love of pleasure, which besets our youth, and the love of gain, which besets our age. It marks especially the

[1] Delivered at Bowdoin College, July 29, 1855, when leaving the Collins professorship of Natural and Revealed Religion to accept the Washburn professorship of Church History in Union Theological Seminary, New York.

passage from youth to manhood; from tasks to struggles; from the gymnastics of study to the tug of war. The first conscious flaming of it is a sort of signal rocket, announcing that the battle is about to begin.

Though liable to desperate abuse, this passion, like every other, was benevolently given. If it causes wars, and builds up oppressive institutions, poisoning the hearts and cursing the lives of men, it is likewise one of the sharpest spurs to honorable toil, inspires the grandest achievements, and strikes its deepest roots into the deepest natures.

We have thus touched upon one of the great motive powers of society, which, manifestly, is not to be fought against, as an enemy to virtue, but drawn into service rather, as an ally. So teaches reason, accepting the human constitution, in all its elements, precisely as God has tempered it. So also teaches Christianity, as expounded by Christ Himself in the chapter which furnishes our text. The Twelve Apostles, still carnal, as we are wont to say, by which is meant that they were still human, had fallen into rivalry and strife as to which of them should be greatest in the Messianic Kingdom. Here was ambition blazing up hotly amongst men divinely chosen to be the hope of nations and ages. Unseemly enough, as it must needs appear, and bad enough; but not wholly bad, or our Lord would have torn it up root and branch. Instead of this, He dealt gently with the contending disciples. It was not the original instinct, craving distinction, but only the selfishness and misdirection of it, which He rebuked. The simple desire they had for eminence, was not held to be in itself reprehensible; though it greatly needed

limitation and guidance. He did not chide them for wishing to be distinguished; but rather demanded right endeavors of them in the right direction. And so He propounded, in the fulness of His wisdom, a definition of human greatness, which sounds at first like reprobation of the very thought of greatness, but now is endorsed by history, and must commend itself to the riper judgment of the world as the only true definition. The great man, He proclaimed in effect, is the serviceable man; and he is greatest of all who is most serviceable of all. It is to this divine ideal, test, and measure of human greatness that I invite this afternoon the attention of my hearers.

This topic is justified, I think, by the occasion which has called us together. The occasion is not ordinary, but academic. Our honored college is about to dismiss another of its classes to a closer commerce with the toils and conflicts of life. These young men, so full of ardent and generous sympathies, are, of course, ambitious of distinction in the world; and ambitious of it just in proportion to their gifts and attainments. It is the office of the Christian preacher, not to malign this ambition, but direct it on its proper path, towards its proper goal.

I. True greatness, let us remark then in the first place, is not indicated either by a conspicuous position, or the buzz of popular applause.

Mere parentage has much to do in fixing the positions of men. In some countries a man is lifted by it at once to throne and diadem. Joyous cannon may announce his birth, regal splendors illuminate his cradle, and a

nation salute him as its future sovereign. And yet he may be deformed in body, vulgar in taste, imbecile in intellect; while in some obscure hamlet another child is born to lofty genius and a large renown. James the First may be at play in palace courts, while Shakespeare is running wild in Stratford. Even in a land like our own, so well cleared of hereditary burdens, birth and blood are very potent. The services which a great man renders to society, and the honors he wears, shed lustre upon his family. His children inherit something of his authority, and are great by imputation. Sometimes they are really great, and the mantle goes worthily from sire to son. John Adams was followed by John Quincy Adams. Oftener, it is only the name that descends; or the name and the merit get divorced, and travel down in separate paths, as in the case of the English Chatham, who left all his genius to one son, but only his title to another.

In many cases, a commanding position is wholly accidental. Fortune has her freaks, and sometimes whirls men most strangely into place and power. Rank and authority may come about through sheer stress of circumstances, and not at all through personal desert. Especially is this liable to happen in a free state, where the meeting and clash of rival interests and parties may frequently bring the weakest men to the surface, like froth and drift-wood upon the bosom of clashing tides. Republics are no more exempt from elected imbecilities, than monarchies are from born ones.

The same is true of reputation. It is often the merest bubble. A man's name may be on all the winds; he may multiply orations, write books, and

make a great stir in the world, with a very slender capital either of common honesty or common sense. If it is being talked about that a man desires, he may have enough of it, and very cheaply too. Mere oddity will secure it for him, or impudence, or rashness. He may dress strangely; or leap down Trenton Falls; or turn reformer; or write his own life, parading his own shame. Nothing is easier in this world than charlatanry. There are multitudes ready to pay for being duped, and then to pay again for being told of it. In politics, many reputations are wholly factitious and partisan. A man is great by the clamor of his own party; merely because he is their spokesman, perhaps only their speaking-trumpet.

In the Church also there are provincial and sectarian reputations grossly at variance with the sterling and solid merits of men. Sects may have their champions, and dogmas their gladiators, whose brazen throats make more noise in the world than did the golden lips of Chrysostom. Mere pillars of sand are they, rendered stately by the whirling wind; but falling flat and sterile the moment the wind is hushed.

Even literature has its tricks and quackeries. In every age there is a distinctive cant of sentiment, a fashion and foible of style and diction, which a cunning writer of small ability is frequently able to turn to great account. Painters who flatter their sitters, and poets who laud their patrons, whether those sitters and patrons be the few or the million, are tolerably sure of being popular. Unfortunately for them, fortunately for history, time is a stern avenger of such cheats. A mere bubble reputation, glitter as it may, is doomed to

be again the drop of soapy water that it was. Mere position, then, is nothing; mere popularity is nothing. Exalted stations add nothing to human stature. A great reputation may chance to balloon a very little man.

II. But I hasten to remark, in the second place, that true greatness is not indicated infallibly even by the presence of great abilities, or great acquisitions.

It is idle to argue, that mankind are created equal in gifts and graces. The common sentiment of the world is, that men differ widely in their endowments; and the gaze of the world is sure to be fixed upon such as are deemed superior to the common crowd. Some men have a rare sense of beauty and grandeur, which makes them Raphaels, Angelos, and Allstons. Others have a fineness, a breadth, a radiance of intellect, which makes them Platos, Aristotles, and Bacons. Others again have a masterly force of will, which makes them Cæsars, Cromwells, and Napoleons. That there is something remarkable in the make, the texture, the tempering of such constitutions, is not to be doubted. That they rightly arrest the world's attention, and awaken the world's applause, is equally true. A generation bereaved of great men like these, or bereaved of faith in the possibility of such men, would be poor indeed.

Great acquisitions are also worthy of profound respect. Next to the power of making great and good books is the power of mastering them. If there be few Platos, there are also but few Platonists. Such men as Laplace and Kepler teach but small classes. Most men are deeply humbled amongst the alcoves of a modern

library. A variously learned man, like Humboldt, is more to Prussia than a dozen of her ordinary kings.

But the chief danger of the world in respect to such abilities, and such acquisitions, is not in the direction of low esteem and neglect, but in the direction of a blind idolatry rather. Hero-worship is a perpetual fact in history. Mankind are sadly prone to be fascinated by mere ability, or what is so esteemed, irrespective of its exercise; by mere learning, irrespective of its aims and uses.

We encounter this idolatry in every walk of life. Much lamentation is poured out over what is called dormant power; Cromwells that lead no armies, Newtons that write no Principia, Miltons that build no lofty rhymes. Men are named in every circle, of whom it is remarked, that they are possessed of great abilities, if they would only exercise them; or possessed of great learning, if they would only use it. No doubt there is such a thing as having one's talent, a real talent, laid up in a napkin. But there is possibly much less of waste in this way than is commonly supposed. There is a meaning, perhaps, in that feature of the Gospel parable, which represents the idle talent as being a solitary and single one; a talent in some one direction, as that of a mere chemist, mathematician, linguist, or logician. Ability of this sort, thus partial, limited, and narrow, may doubtless be content to slumber, or exercise itself only in trifling. But true greatness cannot justly be predicated of any such ability. Real power has fulness and variety. It is not narrow like lightning, but broad like light. The man who truly and worthily excels in any one line of endeavor, might also,

under a change of circumstances, have excelled in some other line. Power is a thing of solidity and wholeness. The strong arm must belong to a strong body. He who eight times led conquering legions into Gaul, could also write matchless commentaries describing their exploits. He who fought at Marengo and Austerlitz, could also build Alpine roads and construct the Code Napoléon. He who sang Paradise Lost, could also pen ablest state papers. He who taught Xenophon morality, might also have carved statues, or commanded armies. In short, he who really does one thing well, can do several things; I had almost said, can do anything. Ability to do only some one thing, is not a great ability; and those who admire it much, overrate it. Even learning, in the truest sense of the word, is not merely something acquired. Mere knowledge, in great abundance and variety, may, to be sure, be taken up by the mind, as a sponge takes up water; but learning, which deserves the name, is quite a different achievement. It implies some amplitude and fulness of manhood; warmth of emotion, clearness of intellect, and force of will. Erasmus, for example, was only a great scholar; but Luther was a great man.

True greatness, first of all, is a thing of the heart. It is all alive with robust and generous sympathies. It is neither behind its age, nor too far before it. It is up with its age, and ahead of it only just so far as to be able to lead its march. It cannot slumber, for activity is a necessity of its existence. It is no reservoir, but a fountain.

Let us therefore waste no tears over what the world calls idle talent, and idle learning. Real talent, and

real learning, are not at all likely to be idle. It is their very instinct to be active. The man who does nothing, is nothing. The man who has nothing important to give, has nothing important to keep. The truly great will have words to speak, and a work to do.

III. This brings us to the true ideal and measure of greatness as set before us by Christ Himself. In one word, it consists in usefulness. Not in position or name; not in mere talent or acquisition; not even in the mere disposition and ability to work; but in the disposition and ability to work beneficently. "Whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister; and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all." Which means, that he who does the greatest amount of good in this world, is the greatest man.

Thus, according to Gospel teaching, greatness is a word too sacred to be applied to mere ability, or mere learning, of any sort or any amount; still less to ability, or learning, put to selfish and bad uses. This is the Christian sentiment. It is also at bottom the universal sentiment. The Titans of ancient fable, who piled mountains together, and stormed the heavens, were not great, only huge. Hercules was great by virtue of the twelve great labors which he performed. Grecian art, faultless as it was, failed of being great by being sensual. The schoolmen of the Middle Ages were great dialecticians, but generally were not great men. Hindoo generals are not great leaders, for, though they wield vast masses of men, they wield them to little or no purpose. He is not great, who

merely wastes the nations; only he is great, who saves and serves them. In the long run, history settles its account with every man, by determining precisely what good he has accomplished. If Napoleon saved France from anarchy, and ploughed Europe with his cannon-balls only in order to a goodly harvest of universal freedom, then the world is ready to shout, that Napoleon was truly great.

But the rule, which the historic judgment of the world thus proceeds upon, and always has proceeded upon, is more an instinct than a principle. Christianity lays it down with emphasis as the highest Law. According to this Law, he only is great of heart, who floods the world with a great affection. He only is great of mind, who stirs the world with great thoughts. He only is great of will, who does something to shape the world to a great career. And he is greatest, who does the most of all these things, and does them best.

It must be so. This world, on which our eyes have opened, is a world of many sins and many miseries. The economy, under which we live, is not one of mere development, but of sheer recovery. Not culture, but redemption, is its banner and its hope. The one grand event in this world's history, is the Incarnation of God in Christ. The one central Person, amongst all its millions, is the Person of its suffering Redeemer. The one great symbol of its faith, and pledge of triumph, is the Cross. The eternal counsel of Redemption was a counsel of sacrifice and sorrow. Christ came into this world, emptied of His original fulness, shorn of His original glory, to do not His own will, but the Father's. He was a man, with human sympathies, in the midst

of human relations and objects of effort; but He never once sought His own pleasure in them. He lived, toiled, suffered, wholly for the good of others. He craved no rest; He sought no wealth; He asked no applause; He aspired to no secular dominion. In the language of the Evangelist, He "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."[1]

Here, then, is our rule of life. The world lies before us in its want and woe, begging for relief. There are maladies of body, requiring the physician's skill. There are clashings of rights and interests, requiring the jurist's lore. There are clouds of ignorance, requiring the scholar's light. There are wastes of sin, requiring the preacher's husbandry. It is not a world for men to take their ease in; but a world for work. It is not a world for the selfish greed of gain; nor the selfish pantings of ambition; nor the selfish struggles of power; but a world for generous self-abandonment, for sacrifice, and heroic toil. He who seeks only to get a living here, is the merest earthworm. He who is greedy for pleasure, deserves to rot, as he surely will. He who sighs for place and fame, is the merest trifler. He who builds a throne for himself upon the necks of men, shall become a hissing and a bye-word amongst the nations. Only he shall be loved of God, and honored of men, who is found to have accomplished something for human happiness and human good.

As to the particular sphere in which a man shall lay out the labor of his life, this must be determined by a

[1] Mark x. 45.

wise regard to individual tastes, talents, and circumstances. He who tills the ground in the fear of God, and in love to man, is preparing himself to range at last the fields of Paradise. He who works at any trade, with a Christian purpose, shall be welcomed on high by the Carpenter of Nazareth. He who steers a ship on Christian errands, with a Christian heart, shall have for his companions in another world the blessed boatmen of Galilee. He who makes his counting-room no mere temple of Mammon, but a temple of God, shall lay up treasures in Heaven. He who goes about as a good physician, ministering at once to the bodies and souls of men, shall himself be blessed by the Balm there is in Gilead and the Great Physician who is there. He who labors in court-rooms, either at the Bar or on the Bench, to establish justice between man and man, remembering always the Judge above, shall hear an acquitting verdict on the day of final trial. He who toils for science, or toils in schools, pouring light into darkened intellects, that he may bring out a nobler hymn of praise to the Great Architect and Lord of all, shall take his place at length with Cherubim and Seraphim. But noblest and best of all, are they who shall spend their days in laboring to win souls to Christ. Wisest of workers, wisest of men, they shall shine as stars in the firmament of God forever.

Such are the various employments and spheres of men. Each must choose for himself the one best suited to his gifts. But all must choose with one heart, one purpose, in the fear of God, and under the light of Eternal realities. No dream of ease, of emolument, of fame, of power, should ever intervene to pollute our

choice. But do what we will in this world, we must do it benevolently, do it for Christ.

The motives to the adoption of such a rule of life are obvious and strong.

In the first place, it is the key to happiness. God is infinitely happy in His boundless beneficence. He rejoices in being the centre and fountain, out of which all things stream and flow. Christ was happy in giving Himself up a sacrifice for the world. In all ages, the happiest of men have been the busiest and most beneficent.

In the next place, it enhances power; relative power and actual power. This world's affairs, managed by God for redemptive ends, are all moving on mightily towards benevolent issues. He who undertakes to be selfish, is simply setting himself against the majestic current, and must be borne down by it. He who works for God and man, with the least of solicitude about himself, has all the forces of Providence working with him. As these forces are powerful, so is he; and their triumph is his triumph. But besides this enhancement of relative power, there is also a great and manifest enhancement of actual power. The benevolent affections are the best stimulants of the intellect, the best allies and energizers of the will. In mere intellect Aaron Burr was, perhaps, the superior of Washington. In the work accomplished, there is no comparison to be thought of. Henry Martyn was twice the man for going to Persia that he would have been had he remained in England; and, consequently, has twice the fame. It is by dying that we live. It is only the good and the self-denying who rule us from their urns.

In the third place, it is noble. Selfishness is pitiful and paltry. Living merely for bread, for place, for fame, for power, for anything but the glory of God in the good of human souls, is beneath the dignity of our being, beneath the grandeur of our position. This world in which we dwell, is but one of myriads, dotting the fields of space. Each single man upon it is but one of a thousand millions, moving about under the eye of God. And then this vast universe itself, whose remotest bounds even an angel might be years upon years in traversing, how little thing it is when set in contrast with the vastness of Him who formed it. These worlds all might perish, each in its silent path, or rush crashing together in one common ruin, while not a cloud would shadow for a moment the broad and peaceful bosom of their Creator. My hearers, God only is great; eternity only is long; souls only are precious. And he only who lives for these, and dies for these, is living and dying nobly.

And so God, in His Providence, has brought me to my final labors here. The three years now closing I must reckon amongst the happiest of all my life. Happiness is not what I came here for; but happiness has been bestowed, added. Deaf to other calls, which at first sounded more welcome to my ears, I came this way in obedience to what seemed to be my duty. Others advised it, and amongst them the sainted father[1] of the honored head of this College; they advised it, and I came. And now I bless God for that advice, and that decision.

[1] Dr. Leonard Woods, Professor of Theology in Andover Seminary from 1807 until 1846, and Emeritus Professor until his death, Aug. 24, 1854.

But God's voice seems to be speaking to me again. A post of labor to which I had never aspired, of which I had never dreamed, now solicits me, and I must go. I go with pain and grief, but I go with steady foot, and a harnessed will, to toil in the same cause, for the same Master. I ask for no joy, no honor, but what may be found in useful toil. I ask only for Christian work, and a Christian heart to do it.

To the members of this church and congregation, to the members of other churches and congregations, citizens of this good town, I wish now to return my thanks for much kindness, for many favors.

Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Faculty, it is meet that I take special leave of you. I know your ability, I honor your learning; but most of all do I honor your high, steady, Christian devotion to duty. I am witness for you to-day before the world, that of all your motives to labor here for the youth committed to your charge, loyalty to conscience, and loyalty to God, to Christ and to Christ's Church, are amongst your highest and strongest motives. Long may the College flourish under your instructions, and late may you be gathered to your reward.

To the students of the College as a body I owe large gratitude. The little I have done for you has been repaid to me, a thousand times over, by kind words and generous affections. May God bless you, each and all.

And now, young Gentlemen of the Graduating class, it remains for me to say my parting word to you.

Your studies and struggles here are finished. Arduous and honorable, these studies and struggles have been; but faint and feeble compared with those which

yet await you in the world, if you have the courage and the constancy to act well your parts.

Let me warn you solemnly against going forth into this world on a selfish errand. You are not your own. You are all bought with a price. You belong not to yourselves; you belong to God, you belong to Christ, you belong to the race which Christ came to redeem. And your great errand here is to be useful.

In the choice of a profession, choose that in which you may hope to do the most for God and for mankind. Seek not ease, nor rank, nor reputation, nor anything but the glory of God and the good of human souls. So shall you find the happiness you crave. So shall you enhance your power for good. So shall you run a noble career, and find a crown of glory waiting for you at the end.

VIII

LIFE THROUGH DEATH

LIFE THROUGH DEATH

"He that findeth his life, shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for My sake, shall find it."—MATTHEW X. 39.

THIS tenth chapter of Matthew belongs to the second year of our Lord's ministry. John the Baptist was in prison over on the east side of the Dead Sea. Southern Palestine would have nothing more to do with the new doctrines. The Great Teacher had gone up into northern Palestine, where there were fewer Jews, and they, less Jewish. Twice already had He made the circuit of friendly Galilee, taking His twelve disciples with Him. Now He determines to send them off on another circuit alone, to see how they will manage without Him: just as the old eagle, having lifted the young eagles out of their nest, and taking a turn or two, shakes them off into the air.

Those twelve men had need to know what might happen, what must happen, and what, in case it went hard with them, they would have to do. Forewarned, they would be forearmed. And so our Lord, who had some months before preached what has been called their ordination sermon—the Sermon on the Mount, now delivers what may be called their charge. One thought pervades it; one voice rings through it, striking the startled ear like the blast of a bugle. The sky

is now comparatively clear. But a storm is brewing. It will not go smoothly with those twelve men. The Gospel is peace at last, peace even here on earth, and peace in heaven; but here and now it means war. And war is *war*. Flesh and spirit are the embattled hosts; in the individual, and in the organism. Men are saved only as they get the better of themselves; the higher self treading down and treading out the lower self. What is virtue but sharp conflict all the way along, and in death alone the victory? If ever we enter Heaven, we go in on our shields. And in history at large the triumph of Truth and Right, so sure to come at last, is not by peaceful ballot, but by tears and blood, by scourge, by iron fetter, by shameful cross, by lighted fagot. To escape with our lives, is to lose our lives. To be slain is to live forevermore. Did this seem hard to the twelve disciples, raw recruits as they were? Does it seem hard to us?

Two great laws of life are involved in our text; we shall do well to ponder them.

I. It is commonly required of us to sacrifice a lower good, in order to gain a higher. Not always, but almost always. The good things of this world are of several sorts, very unlike one another. And it is seldom that you see anybody enjoying all of them at once, or most of them. For example, what is called having a good time, is a very different thing from having a good name; and having a good name, a very different thing from having a good character. There are exceptions, to be sure, but the rule is, that every man shall take his choice, and then abide by it; selecting some one thing

that he wants, and consenting to forego all the rest. The world is thus turned into a vast Bazaar, where everything is ticketed and has its price; but where no man makes more than one purchase at a time. Especially true is it that a lower sort of good has to be given up for a higher. If we may not have God and Mammon for our friends, still less may we reverse the order, and have Mammon and God.

Consider the sensualist, the man of pleasure, what is called the man of the world. Now it is idle to say, that the pleasures of sense are not real pleasures. They *are* real. A young man of good constitution, and in good health, may have a good time of it, if he wishes to. But if this is what he cares most for, he will never come to much. Cyrus, of old, I take it, was no Puritan. But he preferred power to pleasure. And so we call him Cyrus the Great. Modern Shahs, sitting on the same throne, but preferring pleasure to power, are of no personal account whatever; are simply disgusting when they come to be seen too closely. Pleasure is not altogether out of the question amongst higher things, as is proved by such examples as those of Pericles, Cæsar, and Bonaparte; but pleasure *supreme*, is simply fatal to a great career. It may give you an Alcibiades, but never a Leonidas.

So, too, of money. Here again it is idle to say that money is of no account. It is of some account, and the love of it is not necessarily a meanness. Nor is property so much a matter of luck and chance as many people suppose. The truth is, to any man sufficiently unscrupulous on the one side, and sufficiently self-denying on the other, there are no such things as luck

and chance. Not quite every man, perhaps, but almost every man, may be rich by and by, who sets out to be rich. Only to make a perfectly sure thing of it, this must be his supreme aim, and when the pinch comes, he must aim at nothing else. All that is higher, and all that is lower, must be cheerfully given up. Money must be the one thing he goes for. This, indeed, is the price of money, as of everything else; and he must pay it.

But, at all events, he must give up the lower good. He must not be a man of the world. He must be abstemious in eating; temperate in drinking; temperate in all things. He must rein in his appetite. Good personal habits—habits of self-restraint, must be well established. Cool must be the brain, sharp the sight, and steady the nerves of him who is determined to be rich.

It is our very first argument against intemperance, that it is a desperate foe to thrift. It eats up property, we say, and beggars families. Hardly less fatal to a business man are the gayeties of fashion. They consume his time, and make him frivolous; breaking up those discreet and sober habits of mind, which are essential to success. Indeed, self-indulgence of any sort is utterly hostile to enterprise and gain. True for all time is that vision of the sluggard in the Proverbs of Solomon: "I went by the field of the slothful, and the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw and considered it well, I looked upon it and received instruction. Yet a little

sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: so shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man." [1]

While, on the other hand, there has been in all ages but one way of growing rich. It is exacted of the votary of wealth, that he "rise up early, sit up late, and eat the bread of sorrows." [2] At the very threshold of his undertaking, he must bid adieu to pleasure. If his appetites are strong, he must restrain and conquer them. If prone to self-indulgence, he must cut up this weakness by the roots. In a word, denying himself every inferior gratification, he must husband well his time, and bend all his energies upon the one purpose and struggle to be rich. Whichever one of the two he chooses—pleasure or money—that one he can have. But not the two together.

And so of fame. Here again it is idle to berate what all men covet; and covet exactly in proportion to the fineness of their mental and moral fibre. It were simply ignoble in us not to feel that "a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold." [3] And though the fine things, which win the fine repute, are difficult, they are not impossible. Many a man will die obscure who might have been a scholar, or an artist, or an orator, but was not willing to pay the price.

There is learning enough in books, and severe study, patiently prolonged, will surely compass it. There are statues enough in the marble quarries; and the patient

[1] Prov. xxiv. 30–34. [2] Ps. cxxvii. 2.

[3] Prov. xxii. 1.

chisel will find them by and by. Persuasive speech lies slumbering in every pair of human lips; and he who will, may wake it.

But neither the scholar, the artist, nor the orator, must be idle, or avaricious. The love of pleasure, and the love of money are both of them fatal to these higher aims. Learning grows puny and trivial, when waited on by sensual delights; while the love of gain eats into it like rust.

So, too, of art. Growing either voluptuous, or sordid, it falls like an angel from Heaven. And so of eloquence. It flies from lips that are steeped in pleasure; it will not quiver in fingers that clutch at gold. The ambition of scholarship, of art, of eloquence, is a lofty ambition, and it will not tolerate much baseness. The scholars of antiquity were, for the most part, severe and temperate men. The scholars of the Middle Ages were the cloistered and ascetic monks. The votaries of art, too, with rare exceptions, have wasted away in martyrdom to their calling. While Demosthenes, defying outward fortunes, and even fighting against nature herself for the fiery baptism of eloquence, is the watchword of aspiring orators from age to age. In a truly heroic life there is no peradventure. It is always either doing or dying.

Thus it is that the Temple of Fame keeps a stern sentinel standing ever at her gateway of Corinthian brass. And every comer is challenged with such questions as these: Canst thou live on bread and water? Art thou willing to be poor? If not, avaunt! This is no place for thee. Across this sacred threshold neither lust nor avarice may ever pass. Only those can enter

here, who are prepared to work like slaves, fight like gladiators, die like martyrs.

And so of all sorts of earthly good. Each sort has its price; and may be taken at that price. But two or more sorts may not ordinarily be taken by one and the same purchaser. The lower must be sacrificed to the higher. The coarser must give place to the finer. What pleases only for an hour must be despised, if we would have that which may please us for a life-time. Lust must wither before avarice; and avarice before ambition.

Such is the well-established method of our ordinary life. Every step of our earthly progress is a sacrifice. We gain by losing; grow by dwindling; live by dying.

Our text, it is plain, is but an extension of this well-established method to the entire range and circle of our interests. What is seen to be true of earthly advantages considered in reference to one another, is here declared to be true of all these advantages together, when considered in relation to the life eternal. This world and the next world are set in opposition to each other. Body and soul are put at variance. And all that a man may win of worldly good, it is taught, he must be ready to sacrifice, if need be, in order to save his soul. You may call the demand a hard one; but all the analogies of our ordinary life endorse and favor it. As pleasures are trampled on in the chase after gain; and gold has no glitter for a proudly aspiring eye; so is it no more than just and fair, that he who would shine as a star in Heaven, should be willing to have his light eclipsed and quenched on earth. Pleasure, money, fame, each has its price; and nobody complains of it.

The soul, too, has its price. Its redemption is precious. It may cost us all we are worth, and all we covet, to save it. All we have in this world, all we are, and all we aspire to, may have to be sacrificed. The life temporal may have to be flung utterly away, in order to make sure of the life eternal. The men who burnt Polycarp thought they were taking his life. They would have taken it had they persuaded him to deny his Lord.

Not that martyrdom, or the self-denial that savors of it, is required of every disciple. But the demand is often made, and often met. Of how many followers of Christ, in all ages, has it been required, that they should spend their lives in a perfect wilderness of outward want, affliction and sorrow.

The Church has had her hermits, dwelling in deserts, feeding on roots, clad in the skins of beasts, worn out by their nightly vigils, and dying at last with no dirge but that of the piping winds, and no burial but that of the forest leaves. Behold in this the perfect embodiment of a life that abjures all pleasure; making the body, with all its uneasy appetites, a daily offering to God.

Poverty has also sometimes been enjoined. Thousands have been placed in circumstances, which sternly forbade their laboring for gain. And other thousands have been called upon to take joyfully the spoiling of their goods. While time would fail me to speak of those who have been summoned to the rack, the gibbet, and the stake, and who amid agonies, at the very thought of which our flesh must creep, have been compelled to seal their testimony with their streaming blood. And so it was that they bought their souls; paying away their lives for them.

What has happened once, may certainly happen again. To each one of us it is possible for the time to come, when personal comfort, when property, when life itself, would all be crimes. The time may come, it is *conceivable*, when we should have no right to sit easy in our sheltered homes; no right to own a single dollar; no right to live another hour; but when it would have become our simple duty to be penniless, to be tortured, and to die for Christ. Even now something of this sort is still exacted. The Western Coast of Africa, not long ago required exploring, for freedom's sake and the Gospel's; and Mills and Ashmun went there, to pant beneath the burning sun, be parched by fever, and die for Christendom. The wilds of Sumatra, haunted by cannibals, begged also to be trod by missionary feet; and Lyman and Munson hurried thither to the sacrifice.

In many dark corners of the earth are sitting men to-day, who have abandoned almost everything for Christ. And their feeling is that they have barely done their duty: that a necessity is laid upon them; that they must suffer for Christ; and by and by die for Him. And the stern warrant for it all is in our text: "He that findeth his life, shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for My sake, shall find it."

God be praised, if we, in our sphere, are spared the fullest execution of this warrant. The *spirit* of it, however, we may never wish to escape. Our hearts are to hold themselves always ready for the fiercest discipline. Personal ease and comfort, houses and lands, friends, reputation, and even life itself, are to be reckoned cheap. We are to hold them in low esteem. So

relaxed must be our grasp, that the slightest breath of persecution may suffice to sweep them swiftly and clean away. Towards Christ's voice, the moment we hear Him calling to us, must we wend our way, though it be through distress and beggary and death itself. Only he that *loseth* his life shall find it.

II. The second law referred to, and the counterpart of the one we have now considered, is this:

By first securing the higher good, we are prepared properly to enjoy the lower, and are more likely to secure it.

The full development and application of this law would require more time than I have now at command. I can only indicate at present the points, that might be dwelt upon. The principle is, that no worldly good of any sort can be well secured, or properly enjoyed, if pursued by itself and for its own sake. This may be seen in our most ordinary life.

The man, whose aim is pleasure, may, indeed, secure it for a while; but only for a while. It soon palls upon his senses, disgusts and wearies him. It is easy of proof, that more is really enjoyed, more of mere pleasure is there, among business men, in the brief intervals of business, than among those with whom pleasure may be said to be a profession. Pleasure, in a word, is far sweeter as a recreation than a business.

And so of gold. The man who strains all his energies of soul and body to the acquisition of it, never properly enjoys it. He enjoys the *activity*, which the *chase* imposes upon him; but not the gold itself. *He* best enjoys gold, because he best knows the uses of it,

who is occupied by higher thoughts and aims. Girard was a man, from all accounts, of very sordid character. It was his very eagerness for gold, which forbade his enjoyment of it. Had he possessed the learning of a Franklin, the taste of an Allston, or the philanthropy of an Edwards, or of a Wesley, how would his millions have gladdened him. He might have founded hospitals and universities, encouraged artists, and sent Bibles, books, and missionaries of the Cross, streaming from pole to pole. It is God's decree, that gold shining useless in a miser's coffers, shall never gladden the one who gathered it.

And so also of fame. If pursued for its own sake, the chase is often a bootless one. Selfish ambition almost always betrays itself, and then it provokes men to defeat and humble it. To be too eager for applause is pretty surely, in most cases, to miss of it. The best way to win renown is not to work for it, not to think of it; but to work for something higher; to work for God, and work for man, forgetting self, and, by and by, it will be found that both God and man are helping us. He that most utterly forgets himself is the one most surely and most warmly remembered by the world.

General Zachary Taylor, the twelfth President of the United States, spent forty years of his life in comparatively obscure, but very faithful service, at our Western outposts; receiving no applause from the country at large, and asking for none; intent only upon doing promptly and efficiently the duties laid upon him. By and by events, over which he had exercised no control, called him into notice upon a broader theatre. And

then it was discovered how faithful and how true a man he was. The Republic, grateful for such a series of self-denying and important services, snatched him from the camp, and bore him, with loud acclaim, to her proudest place of honor. And this was done at the cost of bitterest disappointment to more than one, whose high claims to this distinction were not denied, but who had been known to be aspiring to the exalted seat.

And so through our whole earthly life—in all its spheres, and in all its struggles. To lose is to find; to die is to live.

It is so also in our religion. We begin by abjuring all; we end by enjoying all. He that loves God with all his heart, and serves Him with all his powers, working here, with a self-forgetting devotion, in the world where God has planted him, willing to forego pleasure, gain, renown, and everything for Christ, shall find that everything comes back to him. If not in its material fulness, yet in its essential strength and spirit. His outward pleasures may be few; but they shall be sweet. He may be poor; but feel that he has enough. He may have no vulgar applause to intoxicate him; but shall know that he is honored in the inmost hearts of men.

The pious merchant, fearing God, and scorning to take advantage of other men's necessities to surfeit himself with gains, is overtaken by sad reverses, and his fortune becomes a wreck. But who ever yet saw the righteous forsaken, or his seed begging bread?[1]

The great mass of the clergy of Protestant Christen-

[1] Ps. xxxvii. 25.

dom are poor: laboring for hardly more than a sustenance; violating all those rules of prudence by which other men are governed and fed and sheltered. But God somehow feedeth them; and their children are somehow provided for.

Devoted men, not counting their lives dear to them, push their way into the darkest corners of heathendom. But the Church keeps her eye upon every solitary man among them, and benefactions go after them as unerring almost as the bountiful providence of God.

Thus in all directions, we get but little of the earthly good we are after, by going directly for it. But each lower good seems involved in the higher good; and by reaching after the higher we secure the lower; while earthly advantages, as a whole, are real blessings only to him, who is willing and able to do without them. The way to gain them is to lose them.

Am I charged with preaching that "gain is godliness"?[1] Not so, my friend. But godliness is gain. It begins by denouncing and denying all; it ends by restoring all. First it desolates; and then it rebuilds. Its mien, in approaching us, is stern and terrible. It blights our pleasures; strips us of our possessions; smites our friends; and lays our vaunted honors in the dust. And then, when all is done, when the desolating work is finished, when our very lives are spent and worried out of us, the scene changes as by a miracle, and all is given us anew. God, we find, is not merely *in* all; but He *includes* all, *is* all. And we learn, assuredly, from our own blessed experience, that "no

[1] 1 Tim. vi. 5.

good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly."[1]

Nay, it is of the very essence of our religion to forget and deny ourselves. What we call an *experience* of religion consists pre-eminently in sacrificing and giving ourselves away to God. The anxious inquirer, it is true, is anxious about his own happiness; he is seeking to save his own soul. But in the moment of conversion and regeneration, he forgets himself, and casts himself without reserve and without a question into the hands of God; to be done with in all things as God shall please. And then, in that instant, it seems as though the windows of Heaven are opened, and the soul lies deluged in joys unutterable.

Two remarks seem to grow naturally out of our subject.

1. We may learn the great mistake committed by men of the world in their chase after worldly good. They make it an end. Pleasure, gain, and applause are objects with them of direct and eager pursuit. Just as though these things were in themselves desirable, and could certainly be gained, and be made productive of a solid and abiding joy. The path in which they are thus moving, is not the right one. The world, pursued by itself, will only defraud and mock them. They must reverse the present order of their lives. They must learn to seek first the Kingdom of God. They must abandon themselves to the service of Christ. Then, perhaps, it may please God to prosper them. At any rate, they may be sure He will give them that measure of good, which it will be safest and best for them to

[1] Ps. lxxxiv. 11.

receive. They will thus save their lives by losing them.

2. We may learn why it is the happiness of Christians is so imperfect.

They have only partially denied themselves; are only partially resigned to the love and service of their Maker. Hence they are still in part devoted to the world, and fettered by it. Not till the last link is sundered, and their souls entirely absorbed in Christ, can they attain to a perfect joy. Not till they are wholly dead, can they wholly live.

IX

THE LAW OF USE

THE LAW OF USE[1]

"For he that hath, to him shall be given; and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath."—Mark iv. 25.

This, apparently, was not one of the popular proverbs of the day. It is not to be found in the Talmud, nor in any of the Apocryphal books. But it has the characteristic pith of a proverb. It occurs three times among the reported sayings of our Lord. First we find it in connection with the Parable of the Sower—a Galilean parable, uttered a year and a half before the Crucifixion. Then the lesson was: Take heed how ye hear. Hearing and doing should go together. Knowledge that is practical, blossoming out into character, shall keep on growing from knowledge to knowledge, more and more. But knowledge that never blossoms into character, shall by and by cease even to be knowledge. The tree that bears no fruit shall not be fruitless only; it shall rot and die.

This same expression occurs again in the Parable of the Ten Pounds, uttered at Jericho the Friday before the Crucifixion; and still again in the Parable of the Talents, uttered in Jerusalem only two days before the Crucifixion. Such reiteration is impressive. The idea

[1] Preached before the cadets at West Point, May 28, 1882. Also at the University of Vermont, June 24, 1883.

is that *having* is something quite other than mere passive possession—the upturned, nerveless palm of beggary. Having, real having, is eager, instant, active possession, the sinewy grip. Having is using. Anything not used is already the same as lost. It will be lost by and by. In this sense of having, the more we have, the more we get; and the less we have, the less we get. This is law, universal law. It may seem hard. But gravitation is hard, if disobeyed, though it holds the planets to their paths, and makes the music of the spheres.

I. This law of use is *physical* law.

A mere machine when completed, and put in running order, has its whole power determined by the toughness of its materials. Protected against the elements, a steam-engine or a chronometer might last forever, if never used. Put to use, it wears out by and by.

But the human body is a piece of organic mechanism. Activity is essential even to the full development of the organism. A tree may grow where no wind ever shakes it. But a child's growth is always that of an athlete. Abundant exercise, inspired by a sleepless brain, incessantly moulds the limbs and organs of the body into beautiful roundness and robustness.

And then, in bodies well matured, there are many degrees of strength, less or more, precisely according to the use made of it. Exercise, to be sure, may be overdone, as in training for athletic contests. But, on the other hand, muscular force gains nothing by being husbanded. Having is using. And to him that hath, shall be given. He shall grow stronger and stronger.

What is difficult, perhaps impossible to-day, shall be easy to-morrow. He that keeps on day by day lifting the calf, shall lift the bullock by and by.

More than this. Only he that uses shall even so much as keep. Unemployed strength steadily diminishes. The sluggard's arm grows soft and flabby.

So, even in this lowest sphere, the law is inexorable. Having is using. Not using is losing. Idleness is paralysis.

II. This law of use is *commercial* law.

Whoever indolently inherits an estate, never really comes into possession of it. And the chances are, decidedly, that he will lose it altogether, substance and title. Real possession is muscular. The toil, care, sagacity, and self-denial required in getting property, are precisely the toil, care, sagacity, and self-denial required in keeping it. Nay, keeping is harder than getting, a great deal harder. Wise investments often require a genius like that of great generalship. Business, easily managed at first, has a tendency to outgrow the capacity of its originators, and so they break down under it. They simply cannot master it, and so it masters them.

Most of our famous merchants of to-day, of yesterday, are, or were, the architects of their own fortunes. Wealth goes down easily enough into the second generation, but not so easily into the third, and still less easily into the fourth. We take a tremendous risk in bequeathing fortunes to our children. Unless the children have been very carefully trained in the art of getting, they probably have not learned the art of keeping.

And their children, very likely, will have to begin, where their grandfathers began, at the bottom, and do it all over again.

Charles Lamb, in one of his essays, expresses pity for the poor, dull, thriftless fellow who wrapped his pound up in a napkin. But the poor fellow was also to be blamed. Those ten servants, who had the ten pounds given them, were commanded to trade therewith till the master came.

III. This law of use is *mental* law.

Even knowledge, like the manna of old, must needs be fresh. It will not keep. The successful teacher is always the diligent and eager learner. Just when he has nothing new to say, just then his authority begins to wane.

Much more is mental activity essential to mental force. In every kind of pursuit, idleness is rust and impotency. We sometimes talk of retiring from business, or giving up our profession by and by. We dream of unyoking our tense, tired faculties, and sitting on the veranda to see the sun go down. Of course we cannot work so hard late in the afternoon, and towards evening, but we had better work the day out. The place to die is on the field of battle with the harness on, and the rattle of musketry in the air.

It is related of Thorwaldsen that when at last he finished a statue that satisfied him, he told his friends that his genius was leaving him. Having reached a point beyond which he could push no further, his instinct told him that he had already begun to fail. So it proved. The summit of his fame was no broad

plateau, but a sharp Alpine ridge. The last step up had to be quickly followed by the first step down. It is so in everything. A man might as well order the robe he expects to be buried in, as to let his laurels satisfy him. New triumphs must only dictate new struggles. If it be Alexander of Macedon, the Orontes must suggest the Euphrates, and the Euphrates the Indus. Always it must be on and on. One night of rioting in Babylon may arrest the conquering march. Genius is essentially athletic, resolute, aggressive, persistent. Possession is grip, that tightens more and more. Ceasing to gain, we begin to lose. Ceasing to advance, we begin to retrograde. Brief was the interval between Roman conquest of Barbarians, and Barbarian conquest of Rome. Blessed is the man who keeps out of the hospital, and holds his place in the ranks. Blessed the man, the last twang of whose bowstring is as sharp as any that went before, sending its arrow as surely to the mark.

IV. This law of use is also *moral* law.

Here lies the secret of character. There is no such thing as standing still. There is no such thing as merely holding one's own. Only the swimmer floats. Only the conqueror is unconquered.

Undoubtedly, for every one of us some places are morally safer than others. But equally true is it, that place is of much less account than personality. One man may be safe almost anywhere. Another man may be safe nowhere. Sooner or later, we are tempted, some in one way, some in another. And character, at last, is not inheritance, nor happy accident, but hardest bat-

tle and victory. The supreme peril and crisis are out of sight. Externally, the new and strange are more seductive and dangerous than the old and familiar; the new places, the new employments, the new companions.

I see one of our city boys on his way to school somewhere in the country. He carries with him the traditions of a high-toned, well-ordered, happy home. The vices seem vulgar to him. But he has gone away from the old defenses of refined habit and example. He becomes all at once his own guardian. He and the other boys, cut off from the old amenities, and closely drawn together by this new experience, are more to one another than any teacher, or teachers, can be to them. They begin to mould one another. The coarsest boy speaks first, and loudest, and oftenest. Some profane word elicits no rebuke. Some impure word provokes no cry of shame. The finer boys are cowards; and the coarser boys carry the day. Or else the finer boys get the courage of their convictions, and the coarser boys are cowed and conquered.

I see another boy on his way in the opposite direction, from country to city. He brings with him the best of testimonials. He comes out of no Paradise, to be sure; but now he sees more of human nature, and of human life, in a week, than he used to see in a year. From country to city is like some great change in latitude, and soil, and climate. As in going to the tropics, so here also the senses are stormed and captured. Luxuries, once only imagined, as a Greenlander might imagine an orange-grove, are now always in sight. Gains, that once seemed fabulous, are now the common

talk of the street, the office, and the club. Something is in the air that poisons the blood like malaria. The muscles relax. The will relaxes. And, before we think of it, there is the old story, the old sad story, of mere passive and pliant goodness brought to bitter grief and shame. Or else, the danger is overcome, and the manhood of the man escapes unhurt; like the three young Hebrews out of the furnace in Babylon, like Daniel out of the lions' den.

The fact is, evil never abdicates, never goes off on a vacation, never sleeps. Every day, every one of us is ambushed and assaulted; and what we become, is simply our defeat, or victory. Not to be crowned victor, is to pass under the yoke.

If prayer be, what Tertullian has pictured it, the watch-cry of a soldier under arms, guarding the tent and standard of his General, then the habit of it ought to be growing on us. For the night is round about us, and, though the stars are out, our enemies are not asleep.

If the Bible be what we say it is, then we should know it better and better. The longer we live, and the more we look beneath the surface of things, the more there is of mystery. If this human race is not a wretched foundling on the cold door-stone of a godless universe; if civilization is not a cruel mockery; if want, and crime, and sorrow are ever lessened; if an accusing conscience is ever pacified; if the friends we lose are not moving out into fearful darkness and silence, it is this one Book, with its unique philosophy, that reassures us. No matter now about either the chronology, or the authorship, of its several parts. Written by men

still it has God for its author, unfathomable depths of wisdom for its contents, and for its shining goal the battlements and towers of the New Jerusalem.

So of all the virtues and graces. They will not take care of themselves. Self-denial and self-control, as against self-seeking and self-indulgence; absolute, chivalric integrity, as against the sharpness of the market; unshaken faith in God and man, in spite of all the mystery and meanness of life; the one simple purpose of loyal, steadfast stewardship and service in our day and generation; these neither come unasked, nor stay unurged. Easy things are of little worth. The spontaneities are mostly bad; mere weeds and briers. Real goodness is as much an industry, as much a business, as any profession, trade, or pursuit of men. Every morning early, and then again at nine o'clock, and then at twelve, and then at three, and then at five, the owner of the vineyard is in the market-places, hiring his laborers. The early, lost hours are forgiven us, but when the bargain is once made, there is nothing for us but work till the great red sun goes burning down.

For the whole Church, in its organic life, the law is just the same. King David conquers out in every possible direction, north, east, and south. Solomon, settling down to the enjoyment of inherited dominion, loses the paternal conquests, bequeathing to his son a kingdom doomed already to dismemberment. So must the Church be always militant just so long as any body, or any thing, in this world remains unchristian. The whole movement is one tremendous charge, as of the old Imperial Guard at Waterloo. The moment it halts, it staggers, and the day is lost. Just the same

number of Bibles published, just the same number of Evangelists ordained, neither more nor fewer, is a famine of the word. Just so much money given, neither more nor less, is robbery. Not to advance, all along the line, advancing, pushing our battle-flags deeper and deeper into the smoke, charging on from shock to shock of fiery onset, from shout to shout of ringing triumph, is no better than to turn on our heels and run. And now the time has come for a new departure.

All through this nineteenth century Christendom has put its supreme vitality into Outer Missions. The hour soon will strike when Inner Missions must everywhere take the lead. It were well that India, China, Japan, and all the Orient should be nominally Christian. But our children and our children's children will have to see to it that Christendom itself is Christian. Wealth, learning, every adornment, every advantage, will shortly be called to judgment. And, from the rising to the setting sun, nothing selfish and barren shall keep its place on this continent, or on any other. It is no good sign that we hear so much said about classes of men: such as the wealthy, the learned, and the religious classes. The millions are already asking, What is the use of wealth? What is the use of learning? What is the use of religion? Men of wealth must be public-spirited. Men of learning must know how to teach. Men of faith must be men of works.

Such is the law: always the law, everywhere the law. The world we live in is a world of evil forces, and of evil growths. Evil is in the air, and in the blood. But Christianity, thank God, is no mere ceremonial, no mere scholasticism. It is a great historic presence,

reality, and power; a severe but splendid regimen of life. Its law is not simple growth, as of the palm-tree, but conflict, as of armies. And every battle declined, as well as every battle drawn, is a battle lost. He that hath, to him shall be given; and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath.

Be it remembered, however, that every gain is a vital factor. Interest changes constantly to capital, and changes rapidly. The progression is swiftly geometrical. It is the beginning always that costs.

The poor invalid, after long confinement, is borne out to the carriage for a morning drive. If it agrees with him, the half hour to-day may be doubled to-morrow.

In toil or trade, no dollar comes so hard as the first one. The next two or ten come easier; and more and more easy all along. As fortunes grow, it is not merely the aggregate that tells, but every part and fraction of the aggregate gains in power as the aggregate itself increases. The poor man's dollar is just as good as the rich man's dollar, only when they are both anonymous. A dollar with millions behind it is of course worth more, because it will accomplish more than a dollar that has only thousands behind it. A bid from Rothschild electrifies the market.

Some new man, of whom we had never heard before, speaks with learning and power. We are charmed; but after all, not quite sure of his reserves. Perhaps he has put himself wholly into that one effort and will disappoint us the next time. The old champion is backed by the memory of many triumphs. We know him by the very nodding of his plume.

A solitary virtue in some human life, if such a thing were possible, would be a forlorn and dreary sight: like a shaft of granite in a sandy waste, or a single bird in a silent sky. Thank God, the virtues go together: like trees in a forest; like birds in white-winged flocks, filling the whole sky with song.

To the young men now pursuing their studies in this beautiful retreat[1] of fine, honest, and intrepid scholarship, I beg leave to say in conclusion these three things. First, the chief end of discipline is high personal character. Second, character is triumph over temptation. Third, the surest conservative of character is service.

Finally, let me emphasize, by repeating, the two great lessons of our text.

The first is, that beginnings are difficult: all beginnings, but especially in character; difficult by reason of bad appetites and passions. Whoso makes no effort to stem the tide of appetite and passion, drifts on to ruin. The best habits are not the ones most easily formed. "He that *hath!*" It is a great thing to *have.*

The second lesson is, that gains and losses grow always more rapid and easy. Character grows always steadily less and less conscious of its own determinations. Moses knew not that his face shone. Samson knew not that his strength was gone. Bad habit begins easily enough. Good habit begins with effort, as one would climb a steep mountain, or lift a heavy gate from its hinges. But it ends in second nature. And

[1] University of Vermont, Burlington, Vermont, where this sermon was delivered, before the College Young Men's Christian Association, at its anniversary, June 24, 1883.

the dividing line is crossed as silently as the tide swings, coming in this instant, going out the next; as silently as the sun crosses the Equator, northward and southward, carrying summer with it, leaving winter behind it.

X

THE COST OF SERVICE

THE COST OF SERVICE[1]

"But Jesus said, Some one did touch me: for I perceived that power had gone forth from Me."—LUKE viii. 46.

OUR Lord was on His way to the house of Jairus in Capernaum, to perform one of His three great miracles of giving life to the dead. In the crowd that thronged Him, some one touched the fringe of His mantle, and there was wrought what we may call an unpurposed, passive miracle. Our Lord knew it in an instant: not of His omniscience, not because the crowd had jostled Him; but because the unpurposed, passive miracle had taxed His gracious vitality and force. Power had gone out of Him, just as consciously as though there had been a distinct volition. The unpurposed miracle had cost. Miracles always cost—purposed, or unpurposed. Everything costs, which has any real worth; costs in proportion to its worth, and costs all it is worth. This law of cost may serve not unfitly, I hope, the occasion which has now called us together.

I. In nature, we have what has lately been termed

[1] This address, delivered at the forty-eighth Anniversary of the Union Theological Seminary, is allowed a place in this collection of sermons, because of certain peculiar theological conceptions, which are further elaborated in the following sermons, and which entitle it to rank with them.

the persistence, or conservation of force. It is only a new name for an old familiar fact. Creation occurred and ceased, began and ended, ages ago. Since then, through all the vast cycles, nothing has been added to the sum total of things; and nothing has been taken away. Nothing absolutely new has come; nothing old has utterly gone. Essentially, nothing has begun to be; and nothing has really ceased to be. Since the primal creative fiat, when the morning stars sang together, not an atom has been produced; not an atom has perished. Probably not an atom ever will perish. Substance, essence, or whatever we may choose to call it, seems to be permanent and sacred. Only the forms of things are changing: water into cloud or steam; wood, and coal, and oil into flame, and smoke, and ashes. And these forms of things are constantly changing; and every change is an exchange, demanding a prompt and full equivalent. Action must equal the desired reaction. The sun warms our planet, making summer and harvests for us, only by burning up; just as you warm your parlor by emptying the coal-bin. Sunshine is a chemical experiment on a gigantic scale, tremendously expensive. The experiment cannot go on forever. The sun will be a cinder some day; as the earth is already, and had to be, in order that we might dwell upon it. The coal we consume in our grates is the condensation of vast primeval forests, stored away in our subterranean cellar. Changing the figure, our globe is sailing on through space, like some huge ocean steamer, whose capacity for coal is strictly limited. When the coal gives out, the voyage ends. Or, changing again the figure, the whole solar system

is a kind of eight-day clock, which keeps good time, and strikes the hours aright, but can never wind itself up. Perpetual motion is possible only to pure spirit. The water that turns our wheels, runs off in turning them ; and the wheels must have more water. Steam, that now drives so much of our machinery, is only the same old water in another form, doing its work under the lash of flame. In either case, it does its work, and straightway disappears ; whether falling in crude mass upon the wheel-boards, or, with hot breath, driving the piston in its cylinder. Force is always simply product ; material multiplied by motion. Electricity, the finest of all our mechanical forces, is still only mechanical, and so is no exception to this law of cost, action and reaction, taking and giving. Galvanic batteries require feeding just as much as furnaces. From nothing, nothing comes. Life itself, our own organic life, in the last analysis, is conflagration. Comparative physiology may promise something beyond the four-score years ; promising, perhaps, a hundred by and by. But conflagration must be fed. Withhold fuel, and the fire goes out. Keep the blast on day and night, summer and winter, and you will stop a long way short of the four-score years. Bank your fires regularly, and early, every night, and run your engine lightly in the summer, and you may see many good years this side the stars. But, inevitably, the fire goes out at last. The dust returns to the earth as it was, that the spirit may return unto God who gave it.

II. This law of cost is also economic law.

In agriculture, what we call the bounty of nature,

the gift outright, comes a long way short of what is needed even for merest comfort. The spontaneous products of nature are scanty. Every nomad excludes ten civilized men. Every savage excludes ten nomads. And so, as between the civilized and the savage, the ratio is a hundred to one. But this means work. Sunshine and rain of course there must be. But civilization means a good deal more than sunshine and rain. It means intelligence, economy, and thrift; it means early rising, calculation, sagacity, self-denial, the sweat of the brow moistening the furrows. Corn harvested in September means corn planted in April, and cared for all the summer long. There must also be something more than machinery and muscle. The land must be generously fed that is expected to feed us; and must be coaxed and humored by well-advised rotation and variety of crops. Crops that tire and exhaust the soil by ripening their seeds, must alternate with restful roots and herbage. Land is cheap in Africa, but even there costs all it is worth. Ninety-nine hundredths of what it is worth with us, is human.

So of all industry and useful art. To begin with, there is the cost of raw material, come whence it may, from earth, or sea, or air. Houses, and their furnishing, tax the quarries, the clay-yards and the forests. Our wardrobes suggest cotton-fields, flax-fields, silkworms, flocks of sheep, herds of cattle, birds of the air, wild animals of sea and land, from pole to pole. Even wigwams and bearskins are no gratuities. Every coarsest want supplied, every adornment, every luxury, means work. Good things, fine things, cost.

Commerce explains itself. It is the interchange of

things that have cost. You have more than you want of some one thing, of several things, it may be; and I have more than I want of some other thing, or things. We exchange our superfluities; and we are both of us the better for it. This is trade. It began certainly later than agriculture, later, perhaps, than useful art; and yet it began a long way back, almost as far back as anything human began. And from earliest Phœnician times till now, commerce has never failed to lead the historic march. It has discovered the new continents, created the new industries, widened the whole horizon of intelligence and sympathy. Its cost is measured by the heavy percentage of its failures. As between nations and races of men, superior and inferior, as also between what we call the higher and lower classes of men everywhere, the painful thing about industry and commerce is, at bottom, the inequality of advantage. Inferior races and peoples, of course, must suffer somewhat under the best conditions. Amongst all peoples there must be graded wages for graded work. Unskilled labor, requiring only brawny muscle, cannot equitably claim the wages of skilled labor, which taxes the brain, and requires the drill of a long apprenticeship. But selfish brain takes sharp advantage of brawny muscle; and capital takes advantage of labor, till labor is disheartened, and angered into riot and revolution. The dominant civilization calls itself Christian, but has too little in it of the Sermon on the Mount. Christianity is embarrassed in being obliged to apologize for Christendom. Our worst foes of social order are the ostentatious, sybaritic, and selfish rich. The apostles of a safer and better future are the men

who preach, and who practise, a liberal exchange, who believe in fair equivalents, who sincerely respect all honest industries, who make all trade, not a sharp battle between contending interests, but only a generous rivalry, a fraternal conference, a real congress of classes, of nations, and of races.

III. This law of cost is also mental law.

Mind is very much more than mere passive capacity; it is vital, organizing force. Its two cardinal functions of learning and teaching are very closely related to each other. The word learning is not always a noun. It renders its first and best service as an active present participle. It is the much study, described long ago as a weariness of the flesh. Learning, rightly apprehended, is not mere passive reception, as of water into a cistern, bringing with it all the accidents and impurities of roof or aqueduct. It is water in oak, or elm, making its way up through living tissue, filtered as it ascends, shaking out its leafy banner, hardening into toughest fibre. Every Egyptian traveller visits in Cairo the famous Mohammedan schools, where boys learn to recite the ninety-nine beautiful names of Allah, the ninety-nine prayers, and all the hundred and fourteen chapters of the Koran. These schools turn out good Mohammedans, but nothing more. The discipline has cost too little. It has taxed only the memory, our poorest faculty. It is only an alert and athletic discipline that tells. Every faculty must be roused, informed, and driven to do its best. How one man surpasses another, is not always easily explained. Brains, of course, differ, both in volume, and especially in

fibre. Temperaments differ. Opportunities differ. But the final strategic secret is in the will. The best scholarship, other things being equal, waits always upon the most inflamed and steady purpose. In ancient Christian art, Matthew was the man, Mark the lion, Luke the ox, and John the eagle. The symbolism is most suggestive. Christian scholarship must emulate them all. Insight, courage, endurance, aspiration: these are the four evangelists of a successful ministry. Omniscience has a joy of its own. But for the finite mind there can be no greater benediction than that of the endless search.

Teaching also must be athletic. Only that teaching is worth much that costs much; and the more it costs, the more it is worth. He was a shrewd educator, teacher and scholar both in one, who, whenever he wished to learn a new language, advertised for a pupil in that language. He ran no risk, since, with his antecedents of knowledge and discipline, he could easily keep well ahead of his pupil; while his pupil had the great advantage of being led by one whose knowledge was all so fresh, so pertinent, and so practical. I have heard of men, of whom it was said, that they were too learned to be good teachers. That must depend largely upon the grade of teaching required. Men far on in the calculus may be impatient of algebra. Laplace certainly might have made the *Mécanique Céleste* more easy, and so might have had more pupils; but he magnetized the few that were able to follow him. In Berlin, I saw Encke lecturing to three or four enthusiasts in astronomy. They found him magnetic enough. Whatever the department, whatever the grade, whatever the

number of pupils, the teacher must be also, and always, a learner. When at last, if ever, he has nothing fresh to communicate, the time has come for him to resign. Antiquities should be consigned to the museum. Living issues are importunate in clamoring for living and growing men to handle them.

IV. But this law of cost is pre-eminently spiritual law.

The so-called passive virtues either are not virtues, or are not passive. Humility, patience, self-denial, and the forgiveness of injuries, are battles and victories. This brings us face to face with the appalling problem of moral evil, one of the great mysteries, not of time only, but of eternity. It is of our theological poverty and hardness, that we have narrowed God down so severely, and shut Him up so jealously, to the paternity merely of goodness. The more imperial thinkers have not been so painfully afraid of bringing God into a real relationship to evil. Pantheism has been preferred to dualism. Strictly speaking, there can, of course, be no divine paternity of evil. But if evil be positive and real, whence is it? of time, or of eternity? If of time, we might be tempted to call it the surprise of a formidable insurrection, not yet subdued. If of eternity, in any proper sense of the term, then it must either have disputed from the start the divine supremacy, or have made its way into the system by eternal divine consent. And so there is forced upon us the strong dilemma of an eternal fact, or an eternal purpose. Eternal purpose is not Calvinistic only, but Cartesian. The two great Frenchmen of the sixteenth and

seventeenth centuries, theologian and philosopher, Calvin and Descartes, are agreed in the confession that God hath foreordained whatsoever cometh to pass. This is what the Hebrew prophet meant, when, in confronting the Persian dualism, he called Jehovah, with such startling emphasis, the "creator of evil." [1]

The old Greek way, from the second century down, of trying to save human freedom and accountability, at the expense of the divine sovereignty, was a bad way. It softened the muscle of the Greek Church, took the iron out of its blood, and so, after a while, gave Mohammed one of his opportunities. Mohammed was not alone in preferring despotism to anarchy, fate to fortuity. Human reason, human conscience, human affection must have a universe with God in it, over it, and under it.

What means it that human nature plunged so quickly into sin? What means it that revolting angels had led the way? Was it the only means of securing the stability of finite holiness? At all events, it was the means actually chosen; and so, in this sense, had its origin in God. This eternal relationship of God to evil, is a tremendous fact. But, then, atonement also is eternal. The Scriptural passages that teach this, are not numerous, but they are decisive. "Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world," [2] was spoken by the Second Person in the Trinity, with reference to this very matter of redemption. Pentecost was ushered in by a discourse, whose key-note was the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, accomplished in the cruci-

[1] Isaiah xlv. 7. [2] John xvii. 24.

fixion of His Son. The preacher of that discourse, years afterward, wrote an Epistle, in which he speaks of the "Lamb without blemish and without spot, foreknown before the foundation of the world."[1] And then at last from Patmos comes the vision, great and wonderful, not only of the Lamb appointed, but also of the Lamb verily slain, "from the foundation of the world."[2] This, then, is the grand refrain: *From the foundation of the world;* not of time, but of eternity, in the very depths of the divine nature.

Now we begin to get some glimpses of God. Not One *and* Three; but One *in* Three; and Three in One. Justice and love, law and gospel, are there together in those awful depths. Have no concern about the immutability and majesty of God. Conscience takes care of that. Sinai is built of granite. But the dew falls at night into its bosom, and the patient stars look down upon it in their silent, stately march. God is justice, and God is love. God is Father, and God is Mother, both in one. "O righteous Father," said our Lord in that matchless prayer of intercession, "O righteous Father, the world knew Thee not, but I knew Thee."[3] Out of the infinite pity came that Son of God; and back into the infinite pity has that Son of God returned. It is a vast abyss of being; a vast abyss of thought, of passion, and of purpose. You may shout it till you are hoarse; but God is not impassible. Our sin has roused, and cut Him to the heart. Indignant of course He is. The ocean heaves. But fleecy clouds are in the sky, and soft rain is falling into the angry waves. The

[1] 1 Pet. i. 19, 20. [2] Rev. xiii. 8. [3] John xvii. 25.

whole might and majesty of God are in that atoning agony of love. Verily we are bought with a price, a great price, such as God only could either give or take. Priest and victim, the slayer and the slain, are God.

So it has been, and so it shall be, in essence, to the end. Redemption cost infinitely in eternity, and must cost in time. Human history almost began with martyrdom. The blood of righteous Abel inaugurated the stern economy. John the Baptist was decapitated. Jesus of Nazareth was crucified. Stephen was stoned. Of our Lord's Apostles, probably only two or three died a natural death. Scarcely a people have ever been evangelized without the baptism of blood. Scarcely a man has ever been signally useful without the baptism of some great sorrow. We learn in suffering what we teach in song.

My dear young brethren of the graduating class:

The time has come for us to part. The three years have swiftly sped. Faces that were strange to us only that little while ago, are now familiar and endeared. In a few days you leave us on diverging radii, that will never meet here again. We entreat you to forgive, and to forget, the shortcomings of your instructors. On our part, we have nothing that I am aware of either to forgive or to forget. You have been a great comfort to us all. God bless you now, to-morrow, and forevermore.

You will have memories peculiarly your own. Your last year in the Seminary, has been the last year of the Seminary itself in its first old home.[1] After nearly

[1] No. 9 University Place, occupied by the Seminary from 1838

half a century of growth and discipline, under scholastic guidance which has become historic, with pronounced traditions of our own, dearer to us than life itself, this highly-favored institution now looks with longing eyes to the better home provided for it nearer the heart of this greater city that is yet to be. We bless the men whose liberal benefactions have put within our reach such splendid possibilities of service in the years to come. Too many of these, our benefactors, are beyond our salutation. Out of our earlier history there would be more than I can name—men who would have rejoiced to behold this day. Out of our more recent history stand forth such names as Brown, Morgan, and Marquand. Other names may not be spoken till they are starred.

If I dared to be proud of anything, it would be of this School of the Prophets. It began in poverty and weakness, praying almost day by day for its daily bread. The planting of it in this whirling metropolis of commerce, was against all our American traditions. The probability, almost the possibility, of scholarly habits and of scholarly enthusiasm, was more than questioned. Even piety, and the self-denial prescribed for clergymen, were thought to be imperilled. But these things all happened before the Deluge. Only let us never forget the wisdom, courage, and steady purpose of our fathers and founders. The commercial instinct was not at fault. Great scholars, like Robinson and Nordheimer, fresh from the Universities of Europe, were soon installed. Henry White came out of a strong pulpit into

till the autumn of 1884, when it entered its present home, No. 1200 Park Avenue.

his Professor's Chair. Skinner, Smith, and Adams followed. I must omit the living. When at length their names also are starred, some other voice must tell the story.

And now, my dear young brothers, fare you well. Dictate no terms to Providence. At whatever cost accept the service offered you, high or low, far or near. Then burn to the socket.

XI

THE STAFF OF LIFE

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"It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."—MATTHEW iv. 4.

ONLY two things within our own power are absolutely indispensable to human life—sleep is indispensable; but not within our own power. These are, generically, food and drink, whose simplest and best specific forms are bread and water. Bread we call the staff of life. This familiar imagery is as ancient at least as the time of Abraham. To the three angels, one of them the mysterious Angel of the Covenant, who appeared to him as he sat at the door of his tent in the plains of Mamre, the hospitable Patriarch said: "I will fetch a morsel of bread, and stay ye your hearts."[1] Moses, when he threatened the people with famine in punishment of their sins, described it as the breaking of their staff.[2] Isaiah also warns the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judah, that the Lord of Hosts will take away the stay and the staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole staff of water.[3] Bread was what the famished Bedouin craved, when he caught up so eagerly the bag he found lying by a fountain in the desert, and flung it down again so quickly in despair, exclaiming: "Alas! it is only diamonds." Water is what the wounded soldier begs for so piteously with his dying breath.

[1] Gen. xviii. 5 [2] Lev. xxvi. 26. [3] Is. iii. 1.

These two appetites of the body were both made use of by our Lord in commending to human acceptance the Divinest blessings of the Gospel. In the synagogue at Capernaum, during the second year of His ministry, He called Himself the bread of God, sent down from Heaven, to give life unto the world.[1] And again, in the Temple at Jerusalem, on the last great day of the Feast of Tabernacles, the autumn before He suffered, He stood and cried: "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink"[2]

These incidents suffice to rescue from the contempt of a fastidious criticism, what some might otherwise have looked upon as too homely an illustration of spiritual truth. Such fastidiousness is nowhere countenanced in the Scriptures. The Maker of our bodies never speaks scornfully of their normal, innocent necessities. Human life, in the lowest sphere of its merely animal functions and wants, is invested with a sort of sacredness as the workmanship and husbandry of God. Since the days of Noah, the law of "blood for blood," has been its Divinely appointed shield from murderous violence. While the countless and varied forms of human industry and enterprise, required to furnish the needed comforts and ornaments of life, have nowhere been more highly commended, not to say, more strictly enjoined, than in the writings of those men who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Even wealth finds endorsement in the Proverbs of Solomon, who has told us, that "the hand of the diligent maketh *rich*."[3] Our Lord's injunction, "Labor not for the meat which perisheth,"[4] is not an

[1] John vi. 22–59. [2] John vii. 37. [3] Prov. x. 4. [4] John vi. 27.

absolute, but only a relative, interdiction of human industry. It is only an exclusive, or a disproportionate, devotion to material pursuits, which is here forbidden. Even in our text, no slight is put upon the ordinary supports of human life. Our Lord, after forty days of fasting, had been challenged by the Tempter to make demonstration of His Divine Sonship by turning into bread the stones which were underneath His feet. His answer was, in language borrowed from Moses: "Man shall not live by bread *alone*, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." As though He had said: I do not deny the desirableness of bread for the body; although even bread is not always a necessity, since man has also a higher nature, which must take its nourishment, whence the body itself may also be nourished, from the lips of God.

Thus may our text be understood as adjudicating the question always and everywhere at issue between the two natures of man. From both sides of the Jordan, out of both economies, from the lips at once of Moses and of Christ, the decision comes, that while the lower nature may not be crushed, the higher nature must not be smothered. In effect, if not in form, the injunction is: Fail not to make prudent provision for the body; but be sure you make still better provision for the soul. Be diligent in all proper worldly business. Let the bosom of the earth be tilled, and its bowels searched for treasures. Let the sea also be ploughed and sounded. Let the very ends of the earth resound with the hum and stir of human toil and traffic. And let the whole life of man be enriched and adorned with the spoils and trophies of an ever-advancing, triumphant

material civilization. But through, underneath, and above all this, let there be a yet keener diligence in matters pertaining to the soul. Let its fields also be ploughed and dressed, till they wave with the goodly harvests of knowledge and grace. Let its heights be climbed, and its depths sounded. Let the wisdom which is from above, and unto life eternal, be more precious than gold or rubies. Let the Kingdom of Christ be more real, and of more account, than all the kingdoms of the earth. In short, let there be a grand spiritual civilization, underlying, pervading, and electrifying the material, till the rebellious Titans are all subdued, and the knowledge of the Lord fills the earth as the waters cover the sea.[1]

It is of this momentous struggle between the material and the spiritual, as now in progress on our own continent, and underneath our own eyes, that I propose to discourse to-day. Lend me, then, your attention, while I consider: First, what our peril is; and secondly, what our deliverance must be.

I. We are first to consider what our peril is.

In one word, it is the peril of an over-mastering *materialism*. A peril not different in kind from what has always beset the race; which, in a new degree beyond all historic precedent, we share in common with the whole of Protestant Christendom; and yet, for obvious reasons, a peril peculiarly our own, sharper and hurrying more swiftly to its crisis, than has befallen the experience of any other nation upon the globe.

A little more than three hundred years ago, the lead-

[1] Is. xi. 9.

ing nations of the earth were launched all at once, and with tremendous impetus, upon a new career. The Feudal disintegration, which followed the dismemberment of the Empire of Charlemagne, had given place by degrees to the well-defined and well-compacted nationalities of modern Europe. One by one, and yet all of them within a narrow compass of time, these nationalities stood forth solidified and centralized and panoplied. Italy was the only exception: Italy, and to some extent also Germany. All the rest were unified, and thereby clothed with power. The Papacy, which had easily managed the discordant multitude of petty Feudal Princes, now began to tremble in the presence of Kings and Emperors, each with a newly consolidated nation behind him, just beginning to be conscious of its strength and jealous of its rights.

While this decisive change was rapidly going on in the sphere of politics, there was, in the sphere of practical life, an equally rapid succession of most important inventions and discoveries, which smote the sluggishness of Mediæval Europe like so many galvanic batteries. These were: First, the Mariner's Compass, known in China more than seven centuries ago, but not known in Europe till after the Crusades, and not rendered available for an adventurous commerce, till it reached the Occident. Second, the invention of Gunpowder, or, rather, the application of it to gunnery: an art not known to the Chinese, who, though they manufactured the compound about as well as we do now, had never used it in war. On the battle-field of Crecy, in 1346, artillery thundered for the first time in history, ushering in a new era. Third, the art of Printing,

also known in China more than nine hundred years ago, but not known in Europe till invented by Guttenberg, perhaps in pursuance of a hint borrowed from the Orient, about the middle of the fifteenth century. Fourth, the discovery, in 1486, and the doubling in 1497, of the Cape of Good Hope, which gave Europe an easy highway to the Indies, and beckoned her fleets out beyond the Pillars of Hercules to whiten all the oceans of the globe. And fifth, the discovery of our own Continent of America, which has touched to the quick every nation of Europe.

Such a series of triumphs over time and space, over mere brute strength in the masses, over isolation, ignorance and prejudice, must, in any case, have revolutionized society. But followed up as they were so closely, and subsidized, by the Lutheran Reformation, they became doubly rousing and revolutionary. Commerce, the mechanic arts, and an improved agriculture, became in no long time the special allies and badges of Protestantism. Papal Italy, it is true, gave to the world Columbus, Vespucius, Vevarrani, and the elder Cabot, but she herself took no part in the great enterprises of maritime discovery, and reaped no advantage from them. Papal Spain and Portugal, not so much corrupted by sudden and enormous revenues, as radically weakened and wasted by causes long at work upon their spiritual constitutions, soon fell behind in the general rush for wealth and empire, leaving their sturdier Protestant rivals to snatch the better part of the newly-discovered territories, inaugurate a more industrial, thrifty civilization, and so command eventually the markets of the world. Even France, constitution-

ally so mercurial, aggressive, and versatile, spurning the Reformation offered her by Lefèvre and Calvin, committed the stupid blunder of exiling her ingenious Huguenots, made enemies of those who should have been her helpers, and was hunted by the red flag of England from the rising to the setting sun. Thus it was that Protestant Europe took on the character which she wears to-day. Purer in doctrine than Papal Europe, and in most respects, no doubt, purer also in morals, more intelligent, more industrious, more enterprising, and consequently more prosperous, Protestant Europe is nevertheless in the heat of a raging fever, her very vitals burning with the lust of gain. England, especially, suffers under the ravages of this vehement disease. For generations has she been applauded by the grateful nations, as the bulwark of Protestantism, and the dauntless evengelist of freedom. But look on England to-day, the England that speaks to us through Liverpool and Manchester, through Cabinet and Parliament, her stout hand not upon her heart but upon her pocket, cold towards us, who were but recently so warm towards her, icy cold towards us in our desperate struggle with the most wantonly wicked rebellion on record in history, sneeringly indifferent to the triumph of law, order, authority, and right, anxious only about the cargoes of cotton, which are to feed her whirling spindles. If this be our Protestant brotherhood, this the fellowship of nations which have stood together for the freedom of the world, well may we hang our heads in bitter shame as we remember even the Crusades of the Middle Ages. These at least were a gallant frenzy, a generous fanaticism, while we have fallen upon times

of ignoble selfishness and greed. Tell us, ye British statesmen, tell us, ye sordid sons of heroic sires, are Constitutions only parchment? Are nations only herds of farmers, artisans, and traders? Are our fathers' graves only mounds of earth, and our children's cradles mere upholstery? Is chartered freedom only sounding rhetoric? Is duty only a name? Is honor dead? Has the Almighty abdicated? And is there nothing for us, in this nineteenth century, but to delve and spin and trade, to clutch and hoard, to eat and drink and bloat and rot and die, and make no sign?

But while we thus upbraid Protestant England, leading the van of Protestant Europe, let us not be blind to our own misdeeds. We are radically the most Protestant of Protestants. We came over here, most of us, as fugitive dissenters; the Irish Catholic, not less than the English Puritan. We came here in quest of a freedom denied us beyond the sea: freedom to worship God, each in his own way, and freedom to govern ourselves in the fear of God. For a time we kept step to the music of the grand old Christian Psalms, with which we first waked the echoes of the forest. But presently, as we took vigorous root here on the virgin continent, we began to imbibe its rankness. So vast a stretch of vacant fertile territory never before solicited the husbandman. Such mountains of iron and copper, anthracite and gold, never before allured the miner. Such a system of lakes and rivers never before floated harvests to market. Never before was landless labor invited to such a Paradise. That subtle instinct of our nature, which renders ownership in the soil so intense a luxury, has found here its keenest stimulant. Alike

from Southern plantation, from Western prairie, and from the Golden Gate of the Pacific, there have broken notes of challenge and of welcome, which have maddened our bounding blood. New Kings have arisen, who know not Joseph, nor Joseph them: Cotton in the South, Corn in the North, and Gold on the Pacific shore. Obedient to their call, we have rushed on headlong over vast territories, planting States as other nations have planted only Colonies; while far along ahead of the advancing wave of population, we have flung a spray before us, spattering the wilderness with hamlets too meagre, and cabins too scattered, to permit the church and the school-house promptly to follow them. And so have we conquered the continent; leaping from the Atlantic to the Mississippi, from the Mississippi to the Pacific. With such a basis laid for wealth in the products of our soil, and the treasures of our mines, we have advanced rapidly in the mechanic arts; already, in the greenness of our youth, rivalling the oldest industry of Europe. Equally rapid has been the growth of commerce, encouraged by our midway position between the great continents, till now we are the most eager and ubiquitous of the modern Phœnicians. Every sea is vexed with our bold and hurrying keels; every climate rifled of its products. We have gone the farthest towards the Arctic and Antarctic Poles. We alone almost of the nations hunt the whales of the Northern Pacific. We find new islands for the geographers. We hang with fluttering pinions upon the jealously-guarded coasts of China and Japan.

Consider also what our blood is: not English, nor Irish, nor Scotch, nor German, nor Dutch, nor Scandi-

navian, nor French, nor Spanish, nor any other; but all of these, and many more, from almost every land and language under the cope of Heaven. And what is not to be lightly thought of, these manifold contributions have not been slowly distilled into the veins of our national life, but have come almost like invading armies, forcing on us an amalgamation of races such as no nation has ever before experienced. If Europe throbs and flushes under the pressure of her diversified, exuberant, and abounding life, as the chafing races struggle together within her bosom, much more may we, who have the blood of all these races mixed in our boiling veins.

Add to this the unexampled elasticity and freedom of our civil institutions—institutions as elastic and unfettered as the air we breathe—and you have before you the elements of the stupendous problem of our destiny now hastening towards its solution.

Need I tell you what we are, or where we stand, today? Behold and see. A vast continent underneath our glowing feet; and we boastful of its gigantic proportions; as if great territories must needs breed great souls. A continent rich on its surface with the gathered fatness of centuries, rich beneath its surface with all that toughens the sinews of nations; and we delving to make them ours. On one side of us the Atlantic, thundering in our ears of Europe and Africa, on the other side of us the Pacific, whispering of Asia and Australia; and we with eager ears open to both. With a form of government, the more sagacious of whose founders feared might be wanting in force; we are, over all the continent, in the riot of our youthful impatience of restraint,

shouting back and forth to each other, from the lakes to the gulf, and from ocean to ocean: "That is the best government, which governs the least."

Verily the Millennium has dawned; but it is the Millennium of a rank and rampant materialism. We are mad after gain; madder than we know. It is the one great passion of the continent—poisoning our social life, poisoning our politics, poisoning even our religion. Just now the very life of the Republic is menaced by a rebellion, in its atrocity matched only by the rebellion of Lucifer, in its meanness matched only by the rebellion of Absalom, but having its root, when we come to the last analysis of causes, having its root, I say, in nothing else than this accursed greed of gain.

It is the institution of Slavery, as all admit, which is now striking so frantically for the dominion of the continent. And who does not know that the inventions of Arkwright and Whitney, enhancing the value, and stimulating the demand for cotton, have done more than all other influences combined towards making Slavery the unscrupulous, insolent, and hateful power that it is? Who does not know, that a long series of Northern concessions, inspired in part by a generous patriotism, but inspired also by the natural timidity of commerce, had begotten in the minds of the Southern conspirators an assurance, now so happily falsified, that the industrious and opulent North would never take up arms in defence of the imperilled Union? Suppose we crush this rebellion, as I am sure we shall, unless the stars in their courses fight against us, as against Sisera of old. What will be gained, if then we only go on just as we went before? What will be gained? Only a respite,

by no means a deliverance. We shall only swell again with pride, and again make the world ring with our boastings. We shall only gorge ourselves with our gains, and be fattened like bullocks for the slaughter.

II. This brings me to speak of what our deliverance must be.

Deliverance is what we want; not mere respite, which only adjourns the conflict, lifting the agony from *our* spirits to lay it over upon our children; deliverance, complete and final. What avails it in a raging fever, rapidly nearing its crisis, that we comfort ourselves with cooling drinks, while the disease is striking boldly at our vitals? What avails it even in health, that we breathe the purest air of the mountains, if we take no food?

In the sentence chosen for our text, we read either our doom, or our deliverance, just which we will: our doom, if we are foolish; our deliverance, if we are wise. It is written, written in God's word, and written in all the history of the race: "Man *shall not* live by *bread alone*, but by *every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God*." Such is the Divine regimen for the nations. They live, if they live at all, by no felicity of position, soil, or climate, by no abundance of material good, but by the living word of the living God.

In our own case, duty is as plain as the path of the sun along the firmament. The triumphs of our material civilization are not to be thrown away, nor its splendors diminished. So long as our land is fertile, so long shall we reap and garner its harvests. So long as our mountains stand, so long shall we sink our shafts

into their shaggy sides. So long as coal burns, or iron melts, or gold is purified, in the furnace, so long will the furnace roar. So long as our lake sparkle in the morning light, or our rivers run laughing to the sea, so long shall we float our produce to its mart. So long as the restless ocean heaves, so long shall we ride upon its billows. It is simply preposterous to say that these things ought not so to be. Who says it? Surely, not nature, whose every growing tree, whose every flowing stream, whose every breathing breeze, is eloquent of life and power. Surely, not the God either of nature, of Providence, or of grace, of whom it was said by His only-begotten Son: "My Father *worketh* hitherto."

Work then we must, and shall, and should. And work will bring us wealth. And wealth will bring us power. What then? Need wealth be idolized, or spent upon our lusts? Need power be vaunted and abused? If so, we perish; perish, as Tyre and Sidon perished; perish, as Carthage perished; perish, as, according to the Indian legend, the last of our gigantic mastodons perished, smitten down by the thunderbolt of the Great Spirit. Thank God, it need not be so. There is no necessity laid upon us, that we curse God and die. Nor is it our task to lay our feeble, ineffectual finger upon this vast revolving wheel, which carries the whole machinery of our earthly life, and bid it pause. It is not our task to slay this giant of our material prosperity, and stretch his huge corpse out across the continent. We are called to no such service; to realize no such Utopian dream. Ours is the far grander task of teaching the giant wisdom, and subdu-

ing his earth-born energies to Him, who has told us that "Man shall not live by *bread alone*."

How, then, shall men and nations live? "By every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God"; so reads our text. The Hebrews in the desert had no need of bread; they were fed with manna from the skies. But our Lord proved that there was no need even of manna. It was enough for Him, as the Son of Man, that He had faith in God. On this He feasted, while He fasted, the forty days. It was God's commandment, which He obeyed in fasting, and this commandment, thus obeyed in faith, was the bread He ate. The commandments of God, then, are the bread of life for the nations.

These commandments of God, it can hardly need to be said, are all embodied in the Gospel of His Son. What was written on the tablets of stone at Sinai, what was announced by Prophets, what is written on the fleshly tablets of the heart, all that God has ever spoken, whether in thunders or in whispers, is here gathered up for its final, decisive utterance.

And this is our deliverance; neither more, nor less, nor other, than the glorious Gospel of the blessed God. Our fathers brought it with them across the sea. They laid the foundations of their civil polity upon it. By it they squared, or aimed to square, their whole life, private, social, and public. They went to battle in the strength it ministered. They buried their dead in the hopes it kindled. They died themselves in the triumphs it taught them. By this our Christian birth, our Christian baptism, and our Christian history, we are a Christian people; and none who join us from any quarter of

the globe, Buddhists, infidels, or idolaters, may be permitted to reverse this verdict.

If a Christian people, then we must be loyal to our calling, baptizing our unexampled material prosperity into the name of Christ, and dedicating our wealth, with a wise and eager generosity, to Christian uses. Wealth we have, and wealth we shall have more and more. The Mediæval Church, which preached from all its pulpits: "Blessed are the poor," has given place to a Church, which preaches the preaching of its Lord: "Blessed are the poor in spirit."

The Gospel has no curses for the rich, if only they be rich also in faith and love and good works. Its grand ideal, its one great lesson is, not self-crucifixion, but self-control; not voluntary poverty, but industrious and faithful stewardship. *Goods in trust for Christian uses:* this is the description of all property, real or personal, in the possession of a Christian man. As between ourselves and God, there is no such thing as the fee-simple recognized in Christian law. What we have comes not by purchase, but by gift; and it is given to us, that we may give it back. How far we now are from obedience to this Christian law of property, how far even from consciously assenting to this law as justly in force over us, I need not say. But only take the measure of our estates and incomes, and then the measure of our charities, and tell me, whether even the Hebrew tenth, scorned by the Christians of the first three centuries as beneath their privilege, is realized amongst us. Or compare our stinted gifts, large as they may sometimes seem to be, with what we lavish upon ourselves, and tell me, whether the ratio is creditable

to our Christian name. I cannot, of course, prognosticate the life of the Church during the Millennium, for which it prays; but sure I am that the Millennium itself will never come, till the Church has revised, not to say completely and radically revolutionized, its whole economy of giving. More, vastly more must go into the treasury of the Lord, before the work of the Lord prospers. And now, if God spares the life of our nation in answer to our prayers, let us, as a Christian people, solemnly resolve that we will not suffer ourselves to be launched again upon such a surging tide of worldliness as that from which, by the judgments of God's hand, we have just been snatched. Even now in the midst of civil war, we are in the midst of material plenty. Our stores are almost bursting with grain, our vaults with gold. But with returning peace there will be returning traffic, such as the country has never known. We shall presently hear the roar of it in our docks and along our streets. And may God have mercy on our souls. While yet upon the dizzy brink of this new prosperity, let us tremble, and let us pray. Let us dedicate ourselves with all our property, and all our power of making property, anew to God. Let us appreciate the spiritual grandeur of the new era, which Providence is preparing for us. It must needs be more Christian than the era now closing in fire and blood; more Christian in its fidelity of unselfish stewardship, or He who sitteth in the Heavens will not suffer it to be at all. We have gone on just as far as we can go in our insane idolatry of material good. From this hour onward, we must elaborate and wield our fortunes in the interest of a far loftier and more beneficent civiliz-

ation. A Christian people, opulent and thrifty as we have been, should have more to show for it in our achievements of Christian charity. Our institutions of mercy for the poor, the sick, the fatherless; our institutions of learning and religion; our mission schools and churches in the poorer and more densely peopled districts of our larger cities, in the more sparsely peopled portions of our extended territory; our societies, which have in charge the printing of Bibles and religious books, the equipment of an accomplished and zealous ministry, and the sending forth of missionaries throughout our own and into foreign lands, ought all of them to be far stronger and more efficient than they ever have been. The measure of our achievements in the past will not suffice as the measure of our achievements in the time to come. The destiny of the continent is now suspended in awful scales, whose beam trembles amongst the stars. It is indeed a noble continent; but it belongs to Christ by a far more sacred title than it belongs to us. His name, not ours, is engraved upon it. And He is looking for a loyal Church; a Church, which shall subdue the continent in all its forces, and with all its treasures, and run up the standard of the Cross over all its rebellious fields. In our closets and on our knees, let us await the coming baptism of a new confession. A baptism of fire, it must be, but not sent to burn us, only our dross.

Let us not fail to recognize our proper Sovereign, although in His advent flames go before Him and darkness is underneath His feet. Let Mammon no longer be worshipped within our borders. Let us make less haste to be rich. Above all, let us renounce the groundless

claim to our earnings as our own; and let us accept the better office of an honest Christian stewardship, as at once our only safety and our highest honor.

Our political life, in all its spheres—municipal, state, and national—is also in desperate need of mending. For many years now, the so-called better classes amongst us, and especially our Christian citizens, immersed in business or else engaged in more congenial enterprises of individual and organized beneficence, have retreated from the political arena, leaving it in the hands of hungry adventurers and partisans. The votes which good men carry to the polls are too often dictated by bad men, whom no prudent merchant would ever think of trusting with his property.

The *caucus*, so honorable in its origin, has become the basest of engines, managed to defraud the people of their honest choice, so that the very term is losing its place in classic usage. Statesmen are hunted down by demagogues in pursuit of the spoils of office. Our largest popular conventions are theatres of intrigue, such as pure-minded patriots may well blush to encounter. Even our chambers of legislation have opened their doors to bribery, and become the veriest chambers of wickedness.

Hence the acknowledged rottenness of our whole political system; brought about, in no small degree, by the shameful neglect of multitudes of patriotic and Christian citizens, too much engrossed in their own private pursuits, to stand forth as champions of the common weal. Politics are no longer a science, but a trade. Things have come to such a pass, that it matters

too little what party may be in the ascendency; there are soldiers of fortune in mischievous abundance, ready at any moment to march their squadrons from one camp to another, just as the eagles of victory may lead the way.

Here, too, let us now make our stand. These abominations have flourished and rioted quite long enough. Our calling as Christian citizens is to elaborate, in its grandest proportions, a Christian State. We must be done flattering the masses. Men are no better in the aggregate than they are as individuals. The voice of the people, when the people are corrupt and reckless, is anything but the voice of God. Let us remember the profane shout of the Cæsareans in the courts of Herod, and how God smote the inflated tyrant, and gave him as food to worms. God's voice is in His Providence, and not in us, except as we are the wise interpreters and the willing ministers of that Providence. God's voice is in the volume of His Word, and we must listen for it there.

Nations are not cradled and reared to maturity, that they may trample on the Divine authority. A righteous judgment presides over their fortunes. They are set in their places that they may execute the eternal decrees of justice and mercy. If they fail in this they are stricken down. If they scorn the weak, oppress the poor, and shut their ears against the sighing of the captive, they are doomed to perish. The Persians have a proverb that the cry of the orphan rocks the throne of the Almighty. The God we profess to serve chooses to be known in the earth as the friend of the friendless, and the avenger of the oppressed. He sees His own

image in every child of want and sorrow, and woe to the people who defile or despise that image. Woe to the nation that seeks its own aggrandizement by the conquest of weaker nations. Woe to the race which seeks the heights of power by setting its foot upon the necks of weaker races.

The roots of our life as a people are in God. And our God is the God in Christ. There is no law of history more absolute than this: That nations rise or fall, flourish or decay, according as they help or hinder the Kingdom of Christ our Lord. The Kingdom of Christ, I say. Not that amount of intelligence and virtue, which an infidel civilization may succeed in diffusing amongst the masses of men, but the Kingdom of Christ as an organized society, built upon the foundation of Apostles and Prophets, and maintained in the world by the preaching of the Word, and the observance of Christian ordinances, and the administration of the Christian sacraments. Our hopes for the future of our imperilled institutions of civil government, must therefore all centre in the Church. It is the one thing of all others on this continent most dear to the heart of God. Our first duty is to save it from reproach. Infidel interpreters of Scripture, desecrating the sanctity of Christian pulpits, if such interpreters there be, must be frowned into silence. Learned Doctors, abusing the Scriptures by trying to make them abet oppression, must be indignantly rebuked. Those who come amongst us from the continent of Europe, especially from Germany, prejudiced against Christianity itself by reason of its connection with oppressive political institutions at home, must here be taught

that the Kingdom of Christ, though in the world, is not of it.

Ten righteous men, as we read, would have saved the cities of the plain. But then they must have been righteous men, thoroughly righteous, profoundly fearing God, and diligently keeping His commandments. So may Christ's Church on this continent, now trembling beneath the tread of nearly a million of armed men, save us.

But this Church must be worthy of its Great Captain, radiant in its graces, energetic in its evangelism, holding forth in its simplicity and purity the word of life, multiplying its converts, grappling boldly with our national sins, and subduing all things to itself. Our great work will not be done, it will only have just commenced, when the war, in which we are now engaged, has ended in victory. For the present, we struggle only to reassert the national authority, and restore the integrity of the national domain. This will be, indeed, a magnificent achievement, worth immeasurably more than many thousands of lives and many millions of money. But this accomplished, there will still remain the far more difficult achievement of thoroughly subduing the continent, as it never has been subdued, to Christ. For long years, with all our patience, and with all our might, shall we have to struggle with the gigantic task of making ourselves more positively and more entirely a Christian people. The principal impediment now disputing our progress can hardly need to be named. We see it inscribed upon the rebellious banners which now challenge us to battle. It is *Slavery*, an institution which we may tolerate, for a time and under pro-

test, as our fathers tolerated it, but which must never rule us in the future, as it has ruled us in the past; an institution, which has revealed its essential hatefulness, and aroused against it the indignation of our most conservative and moderate thinkers, by giving birth to a brood of atrocities, which the tenderest Christian charity can hardly hesitate to pronounce Satanic. Providence will probably see to it, that this barbarous institution shall be so crippled by the war it has wantonly provoked, as never again to raise itself in rebellion against our flag. But though crippled, this institution bids fair to survive the present conflict, passing over, with all its embarrassments, to become one of the chief problems of a better Christian future.[1] What shall be done with it, no human wisdom can as yet determine. But this at least is clear, that we must cover the continent, not merely with the shadow of our victorious flag, but also with the shadow of the Cross. The church and the school-house must enter every settlement, and unto all the people must be carried the Word of God, which alone giveth life to the nations.

[1] Written in 1861, before the emancipation of the slaves seemed practicable.

XII

THE WITNESS OF HISTORY TO CHRISTIANITY

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"And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God."—Acts v. 38, 39.

Christianity was on trial before the Jewish Sanhedrim. It had then no history. Reckoning from the Day of Pentecost, it was hardly more, perhaps it was even less, than a fortnight old. Now it has a history; a history of more than eighteen hundred years, known of all men. Wisely spake that wisest of Jewish Rabbis: Let us wait awhile and see. If it be of men, no blow is needed; it will crumble of itself, unsmitten. If it be of God, no smiting will do it any harm. Let it alone. Leave it to history.

Such was the appeal. We are ready now for the verdict. We have waited long enough. If Gamaliel himself were here, I, for one, would be willing to leave it all to his candid judgment. To-day I ask no argument for Christianity but from its own authentic history. By what it has endured and done, it may fall or stand. Is it a success? Or is it a failure?

This argument from history requires discrimination. Mere age makes out nothing decisive for a religion.

Religions in general are apt to be long-lived; longer-lived than civil politics. Republics supplant Empires, and Empires Republics, much more easily, and much oftener, than one Religion supplants another. The Osiris worship of Egypt, the Sabæanism of Mesopotamia, the Baal worship of Phœnicia, the mythologies of Greece and Rome, all lasted many centuries; and, while they lasted, might have made an argument of their longevity. But they are all dead now, and out of the way far enough. Nobody names either one of them as a rival of Christianity. There is no call to argue them down. They are down already. It is enough to say of them that they have passed away.

Brahmanism and Buddhism vary the problem for us. Here are very old religions, which have not yet passed away. And how do we know they ever will? What is to be said of them? This is to be said of them, that they are like the old dead religions in having a limited domain. They stay within certain geographical parallels and meridians, and subdue only certain nations or races of men. Not one of them, ancient or modern, has had much strength or currency outside of its own native land. It matters little that these two of them are still alive. They might as well be dead. They march nowhither, fight no battles, win no victories.

Mohammedanism makes the problem a still nicer one. Here is a religion, not merely of great age, but of great expansiveness and versatility; a religion of Arabs, to be sure, at the start, but no more confined to Arabs than to Arabia. Swift as fire across a prairie, it went from continent to continent; for twelve hundred years has it lived already; it numbers half as many

converts as Christianity itself; and in Africa at least, is spreading still. What shall be said of it? Not, I hope, what used to be said of it so bitterly, that it is sheer imposture and conflagration from first to last. There is truth in it; these two great truths: that God *is*, and *rules*. It began, too, as Christianity began, with no sword but the tongue. From Mecca to Medina its founder fled, as the founder of our religion, when driven out of Judea, took refuge in Galilee. But here the parallel ends. Christ went back to Judea to be put to death. Mohammed went back to Mecca with fire and steel. Every convert of his became a soldier. In ten years the whole Arabian peninsula was swept into his flaming fold. And in less than a hundred years men were praying towards Mecca over a wider territory than the Roman eagles had shadowed in nearly a thousand years. Why was it? Why were millions of men, of such diverse races, so widely scattered, thus praying towards Mecca? Partly because they had been persuaded to do so. The argument for one God was better than the argument for many gods. And so idolaters were vanquished. Then the worship was simple, and the degenerate, sacerdotal, tawdry, idolatrous Christianity of the Orient went to the wall. Partly so. But such was not the beginning of the conquest, nor such its ruling type. Had no sword been drawn, Islamism must have stayed in Arabia, or have gone but little beyond it. Doctrine, argument, persuasive speech came last. Force went first. For idolaters the alternative was: Islam or the sword. For Jews and Christians the alternative was: Islam or tribute. And so the crescent shot along the sky.

Christianity has had no such history. Its symbol was, and always has been, a wooden cross. Now and then it has drawn the sword, as Peter drew it in the Garden; but only to be rebuked, as Peter was. Its beginning dates significantly from the Gift of Tongues. Not sword, but sermon was to hew its way for it. Fires might flame, and blades might flash, and chains might rattle, and dungeon doors might creak, not for it, but against it. It must spill no blood but its own. Nor might cunning serve it. Wolves are fierce and cunning both. The disciples of the Man of Nazareth were sent forth like sheep and doves. Such was Christianity; the Christianity of Gamaliel's time. Let us see now what came of it.

Its first conflict was with Judaism, with which it should have had no conflict at all. Judaism, then fifteen centuries old, was not human, but divine. And Christianity had come out of it, as an apple comes out of its bud and blossom. Judaism should, and might, have fallen fragrant to the ground. Its altar-fires should, and might, have been extinguished by something better than Jewish blood. Caiaphas should, and might, have been the first Christian Bishop in Jerusalem. The whole Jewish Priesthood should, and might, have led the way from types to antitype. And the whole Jewish people, in Palestine, and everywhere else from Spain to China, should, and might, have accepted the Prophet, of whom Moses spake. But madness ruled the hour. They hanged their prophet on a tree, hissing that awful prayer, which God has been answering ever since: "His blood be on us and on our children."

Many Jews, as we know, passed over into the Christian Church. More than six hundred by the personal ministry of Christ Himself; three thousand on the day of Pentecost; two thousand more soon after; and, in all, perhaps some ten or twelve thousand within the first six years. Nor in Palestine alone. Outside of Palestine the work went on. All over the Roman Empire, the Gospel message resounded first in Jewish synagogues, and poured its consolations into Jewish hearts.

But of the Jewish people, who numbered then about five millions, only enough were saved to indicate the wisdom and goodness of that Providence which had given the Jews their place in history. Their most learned and ablest Rabbi, Saul of Tarsus, who had mastered all their science, went over to the new religion, convinced that Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God. And his voice rang all along the northern shore of the Mediterranean, from Damascus to Spain, in countless synagogues, as no other voice has ever rung, before or since, entreating his countrymen to follow him. It was their golden opportunity. And they lost it.

Judaism, they shouted, is final. Not Judaism, answered the pupil of Gamaliel, not Judaism, but Christianity. This was the point at issue. In their madness, the people thought they could tear the Roman eagles from their battlements and re-establish the fallen throne of David. They tried, and failed. The whole nation launched itself like a hot thunderbolt against the legions of Rome. Such desperate fighting was never done before. At last, the cloud of wrath, which had been floating over all the land, settled down over the Holy

City. Five months[1] it hung there, raining fire: twenty-four thousand Jewish troops inside, thirty thousand Roman troops outside, hurling defiance, and hurling curses, in each other's teeth. Jerusalem was crowded with pilgrims, gathered there out of nearly every nation under heaven, keeping their *last* Passover. Titus waved his helmet from the top of Scopus, and, with one fell swoop, his legions closed in around them like a wall of iron. That hot and awful summer has no parallel in history. Only forty years before, some of those same pilgrims must have joined in the cry, "Not Christ, but Barabbas." Only two years before, their countryman of Tarsus, the Aristotle and Demosthenes of the Jewish race, had finished his course at Rome, witnessing for Christ. Only one year before, the little Christian Church in Jerusalem, warned of the impending bolt, had found refuge beyond the Jordan. Stubborn Judaism, that had stoned its Prophets, and crucified its Messiah, stood there alone, guarding its altar. If Josephus may be trusted, nearly one-fourth part of the whole Jewish nation were within those relentless Roman lines. And almost all of them miserably perished; temple and city perishing with them. From sixty-two to sixty-five years later, five hundred and eighty thousand more of the Jewish people perished in another rebellion. There was no need of that second blow. Judaism was shattered when, as foretold by Daniel, the oblation ceased. Since then no smoke of sacrifice has ascended from Mount Moriah. Since then the story of our Christian sacrifice has gone round the globe. And almost everywhere it finds the forsaken

[1] From April 15th to September 11th, 70 A.D.

and scattered remnants of that ancient people, over whose city the Redeemer wept. Frederick William I. of Prussia is said to have asked of one of his chaplains the shortest possible proof of the truth of Christianity, and to have got in reply: "The Jews, your Majesty."[1]

The second conflict of Christianity was with the Græco-Roman civilization. I shall not test your patience by reciting minutely the story of that conflict. The world knows it by heart. Southwestern Europe, Greece, Carthage, Egypt, and the Orient, the whole theatre of ancient history, the whole garden of ancient letters, art, and social refinement, now acknowledged the supremacy of Rome. On her seven hills she sat mistress of the nations. And her power was equalled only by her pride.

Christianity, then just out of its humble manger at Bethlehem, she greeted with contempt and scorn. Tacitus, who praised the virtues of Agricola, rebuked the crimes and vices of Emperors, and challenged his countrymen to admire the chaste and warlike Barbarians then roaming in German forests, could see nothing in Christianity but a mischievous superstition.[2] Nero's persecution of it was, in his view, equally contemptible. It was not worth its garments of burning pitch. In his judgment, it had better be left to die as obscurely as it was born.

In this contempt of lettered men, contempt so instinctive and utter, lay the safety of the new religion. It thus had chance to grow. All over the Roman Em-

[1] See Farrar's "Witness of History to Christ." London: 1870, p. 97.

[2] "Exitiabilis Superstitio." Annals xv. 44.

pire, its roots went down into the soil unnoticed. After a hundred years, its branches were in all the air. There were at least two or three millions of Christians. And after the fall of Bar Chocab, 135 A.D., nobody thought of confounding them any longer with the Jews. They were a people by themselves, sifted out of society, organized, drilled, and handled by their leaders, as no other religious body ever had been. They could no longer be ignored. And then the leaven had been working upwards, as well as downwards, among the people. The commercial middle class furnished many converts. By and by philosophers and scholars began to come over: such men as Aristides, Quadratus, Justin Martyr, and many more, who had gone round the circle of human thought, and found no rest till they found it in the Christian system. These men boldly proclaimed the new faith as the final philosophy. Christianity could no longer be despised. Books had been written in its defence, and these books must be replied to. Then there came out on the heathen side such champions as Fronto, Lucian, and Celsus, learned and witty men, attacking Christianity with every known weapon of argument, abuse, and raillery.

By and by, persecution began in terrible earnest. There had been something of it before, something of it from the start even; fanatical Jews setting the example. It was, however, chiefly the work of mobs, stirred up and hounded on by men whose interests were imperilled. Of the Emperors, only Nero and Domitian, and they for reasons of their own, had dipped their hands willingly in Christian blood. Now, soon after the middle of the second century, persecu-

tion began to be a part of the imperial policy. It was assumed, that the old Roman religion was essential to the welfare of the Roman State. It was seen, that Christianity was getting the better of that old Roman religion. Christianity must therefore be put down. Bad Emperors, like Commodus and Heliogabalus, who cared nothing for the welfare of the State, let the new religion alone. Able, patriotic, high-toned Emperors, like Marcus Aurelius, Decius, and Diocletian, could not let it alone. Persecution was logical. And the logic, like all true logic, had no mercy in it. Those consummate statesmen knew their task, and went at it with all their might. Of the last two, Decius and Diocletian, it was the avowed purpose to tear up Christianity by the roots. Those were times of awful agony—the two years of Decius, the ten years of Diocletian—when the powerful Roman Empire, shutting the gates of the amphitheatre, leaped into the arena face to face with the Christian Church. When those gates were opened, the victorious Church went forth, with the baptism of blood on her saintly brow, bearing a new Christian Empire in her fair, white arms.

It only remained for heathen frenzy to contest this verdict of Providence, as Jewish frenzy had contested the verdict of Providence in Palestine. Philosophers had been for some time at work, elaborating what we call the New Platonism. It was a strange conglomerate. It taught one God in the lecture-room; it preached many gods in the market-place. It discoursed loftily of union with God; it stooped to magical arts and rites. It prescribed austerity of moral life, and tried to rival even the charities of the Christian

Church. This was the informing spirit of that notable reaction and revival of heathenism, which found a fit champion in Julian. An accomplished soldier, an able statesman, gifted with real genius, ardent in study, chaste, temperate, and burning with zeal for the old religion, he resolved to put the new religion down. Did he do it? In less than two years after mounting the throne of the Cæsars, he fell in battle beyond the Tigris, pierced by a Persian arrow. The bitter confession, "Thou hast conquered, O Galilean," is not, indeed, authentic. But there was no need of the confession. The Galilean *had* conquered. You say he died too early to have the experiment decisive. His contemporaries did not say so, did not think so. That brief Pagan reaction was only the spasm of a dying system. The arrow that pierced Julian's side, pierced its side also. And now the fallen Emperor lies sleeping in his grave at Tarsus, the birthplace of the Great Apostle of the Gentiles.

But Christianity, you tell me, did not save the life of the Roman Empire. No, it came too late for that. But Christianity prolonged that life; by a century or two in the Occident, by six or eight centuries in the Orient.

But I must hasten to speak of the next, the third, great conflict of Christianity. For nearly three hundred years before the Western Empire fell, hordes of Teutonic barbarians were pressing down upon it. But long before they conquered the Romans, the Gospel had begun to conquer them. In German forests beyond the Danube, Christian captives, snatched from their homes in Asia Minor, were the first evangelists.

They had to learn a new language, the old Gothic, mother of the modern German, mother of our own familiar English tongue. It had then no alphabet. The men that spoke it had no culture. In a hundred years, those rude barbarians were reading their Gothic Bibles. From tribe to tribe the sacred message ran, from Visigoth to Ostrogoth, from Visigoth to Vandal, till, in another hundred years, as Niebuhr thought, the barbarian conquest of Rome was essentially a Christian conquest. Orosius and Augustine both praise the conquerors.

No doubt they were a noble race. But there remained a great deal to be done for them. Some of the conquering tribes were still heathens. And all were rude. But Christian faith failed not, Christian courage faltered not. From generation to generation, the missionary work went on, till at last the whole Teutonic race in Europe, now numbering well-nigh eighty millions, took on a Christian civilization, higher, stronger, more radiant than that of Greece and Rome.

The Kelts, now numbering about nine millions, were also evangelized; most of them before the fall of the Western Empire. The Slaves, now numbering nearly eighty millions, came later. But they also are in the Christian fold. So also are the Scandinavians, one of the finest races in history, now numbering some eight millions, whose old mythology is richer and grander than that of ancient Greece, and whom it took two centuries to conquer.

And not one of the nobler historic peoples, Greek, Roman, Teutonic, Keltic, Slavic, or Scandinavian, once evangelized, has ever let go its hold of the Gospel. The

decayed churches of the Orient are only decayed, not dead. Standing even over the Latin Church, the Master might say again, "The maid is not dead, but sleepeth." Greece and Italy are Christian kingdoms to-day. Not one of the great Christian sects of the Orient, so roughly handled by the Saracens, has been destroyed, while the tide that went over them is evidently going out. Mohammedanism has nearly finished the work of vengeance and discipline it was sent to do. The Turks themselves are saying, "These are the last days." The Christian peoples are lifting up their heads once more with the feeling that their redemption draweth nigh. Unless the signs all lie, the time is not distant, when those old classic lands, the cradle and early garden of our Christian faith, will be brighter than they were at first.

The fourth great conflict, of which it remains to speak, is now in progress. I do not mean the conflict with science. This, I admit, is sharp enough just now; and many good people are distressed and alarmed about it. But the distress and alarm are needless. No doubt there is a great deal of scepticism all around us: more than there was twenty-five years ago, more than there was ten years ago. But there are tidal waves in all human affairs, and scepticism, like everything else, comes and goes on its endless round. Christianity has had a great many concussions, and excitements, of one sort and another from first to last. Thoughtful men have not been able to let Christianity alone; sometimes speculating wildly inside, sometimes striking rather wildly outside. In the second and third centuries, Gnostics; in the fourth and fifth, Manicheans; in the

twelfth, a great deal of scepticism; and in the fifteenth, a great deal, as much as there is now, if not more. At times, things have looked rather dubious, perhaps; rebel cannon bellowing on the shore, and the bay all lighted up by floating fire-rafts. But every time Christianity sails through it all like an iron-clad. The great mass of Christians never troubled themselves about the Gnostics. Augustine made an end of Manicheism. The great schoolmen of the thirteenth century silenced the sceptics of the twelfth. And out of the scepticism of the fifteenth century, came the reaction that culminated in the Protestant Reformation.

Christianity, the mother of universities, the nurse and patron of all high study, has no fear of science; least of all that science that deals with material things. Go as far as science can, up or down, with spectrum or microscope, she never sets her eyes on the beginnings of things. Life remains still a mystery. And the intuitions of the humblest thinker are grander than the stars shining in their solemn depths.

No. The real strain and conflict of our day, are of quite another sort, more practical. Christianity triumphed over the Græco-Roman civilization; has triumphed in Mediæval and Modern Europe; has, in short, conquered all the best races in history thus far. Now, can it conquer to the bottom, as it has already conquered to the top? Can it bring the whole human family, its lowest peoples with its highest, into one common fold? Can it evangelize the Chinese, Japanese, Polynesians, Africans, North American Indians? Can it evangelize its own cities, going down into the cellars, up into the garrets of its own heathens here at home?

Hard as the task may be, Christianity stands squarely committed to it. If Christianity fails in this its supreme endeavor, it is not of God. But it will not fail. What it *can* do, may be known from what it *has* done. In dealing with the barbarism of barbarians, it has certainly touched bottom amongst the Zulus and Hottentots of the Eastern Hemisphere, amongst the Hawaiians of the Western. It now stands face to face with the barbarism of the civilized, the reeking slum of our Christian cities. I am more afraid of this barbarism of the civilized than of the barbarism of barbarians. But I am not afraid of either. We have carried the Gospel into the huts of the Bushmen; we shall yet carry it into every cellar and every garret of every Christian city. Last in the train, but sure to join it, are our civilized barbarians.

Let us be of good courage. It is not long we shall have to wait.

XIII

THE ROCK IN THE DESERT

THE ROCK IN THE DESERT

"For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."—1 CORINTHIANS X. 4.

ALLUSION is here made to a familiar but most impressive chapter in the annals of the Hebrew people. The whole nation, from the feebleness of age to the feebleness of infancy, in all more than two millions of souls, had just been led up out of Egypt, from beneath the shadow of the pyramids, from beneath the colder shadow of Pharaonic tyranny, by a series of stupendous miracles. Ten times had the Divine arm fallen heavily, smiting the river, smiting the land, and smiting its inhabitants, till the choked and wailing voice of Egypt told God's people that they might go. The Red Sea had laid bare for them its sandy bottom. They had shouted forth their anthem in alternate strains, the voice of Moses leading the men, the timbrel and voice of Miriam leading the women, over the broken chariots and the annihilated host of their pursuers. And now they were moving on, by short and toilsome marches, across the Arabian Peninsula. From Elim with its twelve wells of water, and its whispering palm-trees, they had come panting and parched with thirst to Rephidim. Here at about noon-day, as we may suppose, they halted; halted at what they hoped might be an

oasis in the desert. But they found no water. The pitiless Asiatic sun was flaming on them out of a cloudless sky, while only rocks and sand glared on them out of the bleakness of the desert. Hope, during the march, had enabled them to bear their thirst with patience. But now their hearts fainted within them. Why have we been brought up here out of Egypt, murmured they, to perish in the wilderness? And they were answered by a miracle. The rod of Moses, once used in smiting the Nile to redden it with blood, is now again uplifted before them. And from that flinty rock in Horeb, smitten in mercy by the Prophet, there gushes an abundant stream for the refreshment of all the host.

And that rock, we are told, did follow them. By which is meant simply that the good providence of God went with them, pouring forth its daily bounties, through all their pilgrimage. For forty years were they nourished in the wilderness. The heavens gave them bread, and streams ran for them in the desert. It was just as though that gushing rock did follow them.

In our text it is called a *spiritual* Rock, because it had a spiritual *significance*, being typical of Christ. We therefore have an interest in that smitten Rock; an interest not merely of wonder at the miracle performed, but also of reverence for the meaning of it. For us, not less than for those suffering Hebrews, gushed forth the gurgling stream; for that smitten Rock was Christ. That is, it pointed forward to, was typical of Christ.

You have thus the germ of my discourse this morning. I wish to speak of Christ as the Rock smitten for us in the Desert. Our plan will be therefore to consider, first the Desert, and then the Rock.

I. And first, the desert. What is it? Our life upon the earth, we say, is the desert, and we are pilgrims over it. Our sinful parentage is our Egypt, and death the Jordan we are at last to cross. What lies between these two boundaries is therefore the desert of our wanderings. It is our life. Not that the analogy is perfect. Not that this world is in every sense a wilderness. Not that there is even so much as a preponderance of evil. For I am thoroughly persuaded that the reasons *for* living are, to most hearts, more numerous and more weighty by far than the reasons which are *against* it. And yet it remaineth true, that this earthly life is not the land of promise to us, is not the Canaan of our rest, is only the scene of our pilgrimage. Though on the whole a boon, it has still its sorrows. There are aspects under which it may be regarded as a desert. Consider for a moment what it is that renders a desert formidable. To the Arabian dromedary it is, as we know, what the sea is to a sailing ship; almost what the air is to a winged bird. But not so with man. *His* nature is not so well suited to those trackless wastes. He cannot feel at home there. He sighs for the green, cool sod, for the waving canopy of trees, for the perfumed breeze and the gurgling stream. And is not this, so far as it goes, a true picture of our life upon the earth? We were not made to feel at home here. Manifold adjustments and adaptations, I know there are, which witness decisively for the benevolence of the hand which made us, and made the world we dwell in. But along with these, we notice also, at many points, a strong dislocation and derangement, a want of proportion and of harmony between ourselves and our environ-

ment. Many tokens are there of the transient nature of our residence; tokens that we are only strangers and pilgrims, as all our fathers have been, as all our children will be.

Now it is a loss of property. Reverses overtake us, and the fortune, or the competency, which it took years of toil to gather, is scattered as in a moment. Now it is a loss of health. With sunken cheeks, and pallid brow, and faltering foot, the pulse-beat feverish, and the strong arm unnerved, it becomes a weariness to live. And now it is a loss of friends. The loved and the tenderly cherished shut their eyes on us, that they may open them on God. Angels rob us of our treasures; and their footprints, as Richter says, are graves. With streaming eyes and crushed hearts, we unclasp our frenzied arms, to let the winged spirit fly. But that one agony never ceases to thrill us. The chamber where we wrestled with the guardian angel, never loses the echo of that unequal strife. The last conscious glance of the departing spirit quivers on our vision forevermore.

To have lost a loved one, be it a sweet child, be it a fond companion, or be it he that begat, or she that bore us, is to have incurred a sorrow that is never healed. Years may roll away, and our brows may knit themselves again to our daily tasks, but there rests always a shadow upon the heart. The vanished feet still walk, and the silenced voice still whispers, in our dreams. Who of us is not this very moment saddened by his remembrance of the dead? On whose inward vision rises there not now more than one dear image of departed worth? The fond, the pure, the noble-heart-

ed; who of us have not wept over them at their burial? And did not our very hearts go down with them to the grave? And can we be ever again on earth so light-hearted as we were before? No, no, my hearers. To have wept in anguish, were it only once, is to have lost forever the transparent gladness of the heart. Through the ministry of grief there has a change passed over us; and neither earth, nor sky, nor sea, nor man can again be to us what they were. With altered eyes we look forth upon an altered world. Life, that once seemed so like a garden, has now become a desert to our hearts. The dead are they that walk the earth; the living are above us and about us, waiting to have us join them. But, to say nothing of what is lost, who needs be reminded of the countless prizes which we may sigh for, but have never gained? Who needs be told of the shortcomings and the hardships of our earthly course? To no man is life a holiday. To most men is it a scene rather of feverish and but poorly requited toil. Even in the lowest department of our cares, how small is the number of those who are above being anxious about the supply of their daily wants. How much time and how much thought it takes to keep our bodies comfortably fed and clothed and sheltered. How large a portion of our race do little else than labor for their daily sustenance. "Give us *this day* our daily bread," is the petition framed for us by our Lord Himself. And then, as we go beyond these wants, and our ambition takes a lordlier sweep, whether it be wealth, or learning, or the seat of power that is craved, how few of us are ever entirely gratified. For one that triumphs, there are scores that fail. Who

needs be told that broken purposes, thwarted aspirations, and disappointed hopes lie strewn, like silenced cannon, and like dying men, along the line of a retreating army?

The one secret of all this suffering is to be sought for in the contradiction which is found to exist between our circumstances and our endowments. Brain and heart are both too large for us. The inward force is too aspiring and too expansive for the low and narrow tenement which it inhabits. Our immortality is a boon that costs us dear. The aspirations it gives rise to, make our life in this world seem paltry, and its cares a curse. We are all of us like kings in exile. We have lost our thrones, and are pawning our jewels for our daily bread.

But these are not our only, nor by any means our chiefest, sorrows. The greatest burden, and the saddest blight of all, is the sense we have of sin. Oh, this miserable, oppressive, harrowing sense of guilt! Years ago we committed an offence. Yesterday we sinned. And all the period between is dark with remorseful memories. To be constrained to chide one's self for having done amiss, to be compelled to bear about with us, wherever we go, the feeling of unworthiness, the pangs of self-reproach, and the blush of shame. Oh! this is the real tragedy of life. With such burdens it is impossible to feel quite at ease. The soul has no perfect rest. And the disquiet there is within seems to pass forth and fasten upon the world.

> "It is the soul's prerogative, its fate,
> To shape the outward to its own estate.

> If right within, then all without is well,
> If wrong, it makes of all without a hell."

And so the world becomes a desert to us, blighted in its very aspect by the hot, sirocco breath of our inordinate desires; blighted and cursed in the whole procession of its pursuits and fortunes by the inward discord which ever reports and repeats itself in the outward calamities of states and races.

But courage, my brother, courage. Even this blank desert is better than it seems. Though it has no waving wheat-fields, it has manna for its morning dew. Though its sands be trackless, there move on always before us the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. But in addition to all, and above all, though there be no running streams, there is the smitten Rock —the Rock smitten to assuage our thirst.

2. And that Rock is Christ. It is Christ, and only Christ, that can slake our thirst, and still our murmurings.

What men call pleasure only palls upon our jaded senses. Chesterfield, in his old age, said of the world: "I have enjoyed all its pleasures, and consequently know their futility, and do not regret their loss." As for gold, no wealth of Crœsus ever yet purchased a single night of refreshing sleep for a sick man tossing in fever upon his luxurious couch. As for power, the Alexanders and Napoleons have all shed bitter tears of disappointment, either conquering or conquered. As for wisdom, from Solomon to Burke, the wisest have been also the saddest of men. As for friendship and affection even, their idols are shivered one by one.

"Vanity of vanities," saith the Hebrew preacher, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." All around us sweeps the glimmering desert, with no refreshment for us but what is furnished by the gushing rock. And that rock, we say again, is Christ.

But who and what is the Christ we speak of? I ask not now for the teachings of Scripture concerning Him. I challenge man's own aching heart for an answer. Tell me, thou baffled, worried, fainting human spirit, tell me, what is the Christ thou cravest? Is it only a human brother? Is it only an awful God? Or is it the two united, in a sweet but stupendous miracle of love? The answer cannot be slow or doubtful. Our brains may stagger underneath this majestic problem of an incarnate God; but our weeping eyes wander vacant till they find this sweetly beaming star, and our home-sick hearts, prophetic of the awful majesty, know no rest till they rest upon the bosom of the Man Divine.

Annihilate my faith in the God-man, Christ, the Son at once of Mary and of God, and what, then, is life? My thoughts fly back along the centuries, and fly abroad over the earth. What is it to me, that myriads behind me in the past, around me in the present, have been reduced from opulence to want? What is it to me, that myriads have tossed, or are tossing at this moment, on beds of pain? What is it to me, that myriads have been traduced and tortured by lying tongues? What is it to me, that myriads of gifted and aspiring men have gathered only ashes in their ambitious grasp? What is it to me, that for six thousand years these human generations have been coming and going? What is it to me, that every human lip has quivered in an-

guish, and every human door-sill darkened beneath a departing form? What is it to me, that with every swing of the pendulum, a life is ended? These defeats and agonies of others are no solace to me. Mere human fellowship in suffering and death, though this fellowship be universal, is nothing to the purpose. When my property, slowly earned, takes to itself swift wings; when my veins dilate and throb with fever; when my good name is slandered; when my best plans miscarry; when my child gasps in death, and speaks to me no more, it is to me just as if such things had never happened before. I am the one target and wreck of Providence; I, and I alone. There is an immortal youth and freshness of sorrow, as of the soul itself. Always it strikes, as if it had never struck before. Like the lightning, its path is always new. And then when I come to die, I die alone, and death is as new and strange to me, as it was to Abel or to Adam.

But, above all, when conscience awakes and tells me I have sinned, what is it to me, that all other men have sinned? The Roman poet may sing, that "to err is *human*." I know it well. But it does not, cannot quiet my own remorse. I stand alone. God is just, His law a gigantic and awful presence, and I the only sinner writhing in its inexorable grasp.

But give me now the God-man, Christ, and this dreary desert of my sorrow-stricken, sinful life receives at once its gushing rock. Show me the Son of Mary in His Mother's arms; that Son of Mary, the eternal child; and every human cradle, sheltering its frail treasure, shines in a heavenly light. Let me behold Him amongst the Doctors in the Temple, speaking

with a wisdom not merely beyond His years, but beyond all human years; and youth, with all its vanities, is thenceforward sacred to me. Let me behold Him at His father's bench at Nazareth, in daily toil for His daily bread; thenceforth there shall be to me no irksome drudgery in human tasks, and in humblest poverty no sting. Let me behold Him at the Marriage Feast in Cana, a cheerful but wonder-working guest; and then this tenderest of human relationships, tenderest and most exposed, shall find at once its benediction and its shield. Let me see Him in Perea, beyond the Jordan, benignly taking up little children in His arms to bless them; and then my child may go to nestle in His bosom, without a murmur, if not without a tear. Let me see Him at the Gate of Nain, breaking the sceptre of the King of Terrors; and then I can tell the mourner to weep no more. Let me hear Him at the sepulchre of Lazarus; and then I shall know that my brother, just lowered into his grave, is to rise again. Let me behold Him in the last struggle upon the cross, and then I too shall dare to die. Let me hear Him bless the widow and her mites; and then I shall know it is worth my while to labor for Him till I die. Let me hear Him commission His Apostles; and then I shall set my face, and advance my foot, with courage to the conquest of the globe. Above all, let me behold Him groaning in the garden, and praying upon the cross, "Father, forgive them," while the earth reels and the heavens shudder at His dying cry; and then I shall know, I shall *know*, that my sins may all be pardoned.

Thus, and thus only, is the riddle solved. Thus, and

thus only, is the Providence of God completely justified. We bow, dumb with pain, before the mystery of moral evil, thrusting itself upon a system ordained of God. We stand aghast as we behold a world, over which the morning stars sang together, passing with a wail into the shadow which sin has flung upon its path. We ask, whether such a world as this, so full of disappointments and defeats, of crimes and sorrows, of consuming sickness and of ghastly death, can be, indeed, God's world? Natural Theology may take its slate, and cipher out the problem as it will; asserting and proving an overplus of happiness. All praise to Natural Theology for its good intentions and its good achievements. But what, after all, shall be said of the huge mass of evil, which utterly refuses to be ciphered away? But let redeeming love shoot its beams into the darkness, let the radiant form of the Son of God, incarnate for human deliverance, be seen walking up and down the furnace of our earthly afflictions, and straightway the torturing problem is solved. We take up the line of our march through the desert without murmuring, when we behold the smitten rock moving on before us over the sterile sand.

To us now this world is doubtless brighter than it would have been without the heavy shadows of sin upon it; for in its sky has been set the Star of Bethlehem. Our own nature has been dignified, as it would not have been but for our fall; for now God's own Son is our Brother. Even our life of sorrow is glorified, since those shining feet have traversed it so meekly from the manger to the tomb. With this rock in our desert, the desert shouts and sings. A great honor has thus been

put upon us as a race; greater than was ever put, or ever will be, upon those elder sons of God, the blessed angels, who are keeping their first estate. For verily our Lord took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham.[1]

But of what avail to us is this smitten rock, unless we stoop to drink of its gushing stream? Of what avail to us the presence in human history of this Divine Humanity, unless we are consciously related to it by a living faith? There is, indeed, our common humanity, which has been honored by this Incarnate Mystery. We are, indeed, no mere aggregate of individuals; we are a race, gone down together in one common calamity of sin and suffering. But we are also individuals; each heart smitten with its own sin; each heart knowing its own sorrow. To each heart, also, there speaks the voice of mercy. And each heart must answer for itself.

What shall our response be? Christ's great, central work is not teaching, which rivals the lessons of sages; not example, which rivals the exploits of heroes; but atonement, which scatters the clouds of Divine wrath, and takes away our sin.

Christ entered our world, and assumed our nature, on an errand of redemption. That Divine career culminated in suffering. Whatever else our Lord might have done or endured for us, all would have fallen short of our necessities, had He not died for us. His cross is therefore to be the grand central object of our thoughts. And there is no solid joy for us in any earthly pursuit or inheritance, no strength for us in any earthly undertaking, no sufficient solace in any

[1] Heb. ii. 16.

earthly grief, no peace or victory in dying, till we have tasted of Divine grace, and received the pardon of our sins. Our first step towards Christ must be, therefore, with bowed heads, and our hands upon our breasts. Confessing our sins with honest shame and grief, we must turn our eyes on Calvary for help. What our Lord suffered for us, when He endured the buffetings of eternal justice, must be the beginning of our hope. From those Divine lips, pallid with agony, must we pluck the assurance of our pardon. It is He that must tell us, from beneath the shadow of His Father's hidden countenance, that our sins are cancelled.

I saw One hanging on a tree,
In agony and blood;
Who fixed His languid eyes on me,
As near the cross I stood.

Sure, never till my latest breath,
Can I forget that look;
It seemed to charge me with His death,
Though not a word He spoke.

A second look He gave that said,
"I freely all forgive;
This blood is for thy ransom paid,
I die that thou mayest live."

Strange as it may seem to such as have never tried it, this is the beginning of our only proper life. All else is false and hollow. Without the vision of an atoning Saviour, joy is only frenzy, grief is despair, life a failure, and death an overwhelming defeat. With this vision, joy and grief are equally the sacraments of

Providence, life a victorious march, and death a glorious triumph over the last enemy of our peace.

That spiritual rock, we are told, followed the Hebrews; followed them from Egypt to Palestine; followed them through all their wanderings by day and by night, summer and winter, in peace and in war, for forty years. So, too, shall our Rock follow us. In health and peace and prosperity, it shall pour its libations upon our gladness. In sickness, war and want, it shall cool our fevered veins. In death, it shall moisten our parched lips. Our feet, it is true, must still tread the hot pavement of the Desert. Hardship and sorrow must still march with us. But we need not sink discouraged and murmuring; for we are not to perish by the way. Our course, in spite of all its windings, and all its warfare, is ever onward towards the pleasant land. "If there be a place," sighed the Roman Tacitus, "if there be a place for the souls of the pious." Such a place we know there is.

> Sweet fields, beyond the swelling flood,
> Stand dressed in living green.

There, and only there, may we look for rest, where our great Captain has entered before us. Here upon our march, the best we can hope for, the best we can ask for, is the guiding pillar and the gushing rock.

XIV

RECEIVING AND GIVING

RECEIVING AND GIVING

"I have shewed you all things, how that so laboring, ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."—ACTS xx. 35.

Two things related of Christ reach us through channels outside of the four Evangelists; and only two.

One of these two things is apparently a tradition of Gethsemane. Luke reports the agony and the bloody sweat. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews[1] makes mention also of "strong crying and tears." The other thing is a saying of Christ, quoted by Paul in his address to the Ephesian elders at Miletus, twenty-eight years after the death of Christ: *It is more blessed to give than to receive.* Human selfishness is saying, as Chrysostom reminds us, *Let me receive to-day, and give to-morrow.*

"*Remember* the words!" This implies that the saying was then current. And we cannot help asking ourselves why so remarkable a saying is not reported by Matthew, who wrote his Gospel just about this very time that Paul was in Asia Minor, and who makes a specialty of reporting the discourses of our Lord. Nor can we help thinking, that this saying is all the more impressive for coming to us in the way it does. It now

[1] Heb. v. 7.

stands out in the sky like the evening star after sunset, all alone. Seven sayings on the cross were the last in His public ministry which we expected ever to hear from those blessed lips, so marble-white, so marble-cold. But those lips seem now to move again, and we hear them say, "*It is more blessed to give than to receive.*"

I. We shall do well to consider, first, how good it is to receive.

Pride, of course, is wounded by receiving. And undoubtedly there is danger in it, more danger than perhaps we think for. Charity runs the risk of enfeebling the will of its recipient. Unfortunate people, too sure of being helped out of any want or trouble, are not so likely to do all they might have done to help themselves. The monasteries of the Middle Ages unquestionably encouraged and promoted pauperism in relieving it, just as modern poor-laws have done, and are doing. And so we are tempted to say, that it is not a good thing at all to receive.

But we must not say just that. There is only one Being in the universe who has need of nothing outside of Himself. It puts a great strain upon our faculties to think of God in His absoluteness; but if He be Creator, He must have been awfully alone before creating, and, to be happy, had no need of angels singing round Him, and would still be happy, if they sang no more, and the universe were all a blank again, vanishing like a puff of smoke from a passing railway train. But for those angels, as for us, independence would be rebellion. The finite is nothing without the infinite.

Lungs without air, eyeballs without light, such are angels, such are men, without God.

Some thirty years ago there was a frightful famine in Ireland. Men were dying of hunger on their cabin floors; and starving infants lay crying on their mothers' breasts. It was not a blessed thing to starve and die there on the cabin floor; but it was a blessed thing to see ship after ship, loaded deep with grain, from beyond the sea, come straining into port.

There is another hunger of the mind, which gnaws with still sharper tooth. Nor is it a blessed thing to be unwise, or ignorant. But if unwise, or ignorant, it is a blessed thing to be advised and taught. And the heart is always hungry. No man lives happily alone. The wisest and the best is wiser and better for the friends he has.

The water-lily, it has been finely said, lies afloat upon the lake, but opens its petals quicker to the rain than any flower of the desert. Sometimes the waves and billows of Providence chill us to the marrow. And I cannot call it blessed to gasp and shiver in the surging tide. But it is a blessed thing to look out through blinding tears upon a friendly face, and to feel the touch of a friendly hand, though not a word be spoken.

We have more need of one another, all of us, and may do more for one another, than at first appears. There was never a man so rich, as not to need something, at some time, which his money could not buy. Never a man so great or learned, as not to need, at some time, the honest judgment of some plain person far less gifted, far less learned, than himself. Never a man so assured and happy, that trouble shall never come.

Why should any man be too proud to receive? or have any pride at all in giving? What have we, any of us, that we did not receive? Houses, or lands, or rank, or learning, or nameless gifts of head and heart? Not a thing is ours. The house you live in is only the porter's lodge. We are tenants, servants, stewards, all of us. What we get, or seem to get, of one another, has had a long way to come. The only real giver is God.

But mere finite dependence is not the whole of it. Deep underneath this sense of finite limitation, and of absolute dependence, there burns and burrows a consuming sense of ill-doing and of ill-desert, like fire underneath the vineyards of Vesuvius. Our temples throb, and our veins are hot, with the fever of sin. Our Shepherd must drop the staff, to lift the sword. Pity us, ye good angels, keeping your first estate; pity us, as well ye may. The anger of the Shepherd is hot against us, and its heat is just. We have no excuse to offer, no complaint to make. The probation was a fair one. The man and the woman, free to stand, did freely fall: the father and the mother of us all. "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." And they died? Yes, and no. There is a better pity than that of angels. "God is Love," may, or may not, be a definition of His essence, but is nearer to it than that other image of the consuming fire. Within the vastness of His nature, unseen at first, there were hidden springs of mercy, in which the rugged mountains of His justice mirrored their awful heads. God is not One only, as philosophy has vainly sought to prove; but Three in One, as philosophy could only guess. Hence the counsel, and the covenant, of redemption.

The Son consents to suffer; the Father consents to pardon; the Spirit consents to renew and sanctify. And now again the angels sing, hanging over the Judean hills: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men."

And so we are saved at last; gathered in out of the wild pasture, and out of the stormy night. The strong battlements of Zion are round about us, and the deadly foes of our peace are all outside the gates. It was no kind of merit of our own that saved us; only grace. We do nothing but receive. We give nothing. We have nothing to give. Even these our own acts of penitence and faith, of love, and trust, and glowing gratitude, are God's own gifts to us, or they had never been ours to Him. The very melodies we make in prayer and song, now of wailing over sin, now of glad hosannas as we swell the triumphal procession of our Lord, are struck from our heart-strings by the hand that made us. And if ever we go in through the gates of pearl, our song will be: "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us Kings and Priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever."[1]

Tell me, is it not blessed to receive? Blessed to come empty-handed, when beckoned by such a Giver, standing laden with such a gift? Tell me, troubled spirit, mourning bitterly for sin, and fearing the crash of righteous judgment, is it not blessed to hear the "Father, forgive them," of the dying Son? Tell me, fair, sweet child, snatched from thy mother's bosom,

[1] Rev. i. 5, 6.

like a rose by a whirlwind from its parent stem, tell me, as thy little voice goes singing up, is it not more blessed to be saved by Christ, than to be saved, if that were possible, by being innocent? Tell me, saintly veteran, lying down to die with thy armor on thee, apostle, statesman, hero, poet, sage, tell me, is it not more blessed, after all this warfare, to be saved by grace, than to be saved, if that were possible, by any doings of thine own? We have heard the answer. Centuries ago it burst from gallant lips, on the eve of martyrdom: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course"; with that ringing climax of humble trust in atoning blood: "I have kept the faith."[1] Give me this humble, ardent fellowship of the Apostles; not that proud and icy fellowship of the Stoics. When you see me dying, say not one word of all that I have done, or have tried to do; only remind me of what my Lord has done, and I will reach out my hand to touch the pierced feet which I see shining through the veil. Then at last it will be safe for me to be forgiven.

II. And yet, though it be so blessed to receive, it is far more blessed to give.

It is more blessed to feed the starving, than starving, to be fed. More blessed to teach and counsel the ignorant, than, ignorant, to be taught and counselled. More blessed to love, than to be loved. More blessed to comfort, than to be comforted. More blessed to forgive, than to be forgiven. More blessed to save, than to be saved. The last is ours, the first is God's. The last is privilege; the first, prerogative. What

[1] 2 Tim. iv. 7.

poor, tattered prodigal, folded in Heaven to his Father's bosom, shall ever interpret, to all eternity, the throbbings of that Father's heart? Only God knows God. "O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee: but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent Me."[1]

Let us endeavor now to understand the greater blessedness of giving.

Giving implies having; and the sense of having, is one of our keenest pleasures. In its coarsest form of material property, possession, mere possession is a great delight. Land that has been in your family for generations, the house that your father built, or the capital he saved, or what you may have earned and saved for yourself, you may well think much of. They represent industry, frugality, sagacity, and self-denial. The Mediæval Church misunderstood that beautiful beatitude, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," preaching from all her pulpits: "Blessed are the poor." Wealth is not of necessity a curse, nor poverty a blessing. Agur's prayer steers midway between the two: "Give me neither poverty, nor riches."[2] If flushed and bloated wealth be not a blessing, so neither is pallid and haggard poverty. If there be anything to choose between them, it lies just here, that the faults and vices of the rich are more accessible to rebuke than the faults and vices of the poor. Wholesome and easy abundance is better than either extreme. It is better for our manhood, that we have enough for daily comfort; enough for culture; enough for hospitality; enough for Christian charity. More than this may, or may not, be a

[1] John xvii. 25. [2] Prov. xxx. 8.

blessing. Certainly it can be a blessing only by being accepted as a trust.

So of mental wealth. The Hebrew preacher, to be sure, seems to make light of it. "For in much wisdom," he says, "is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow." [1] But it is mainly an outward discomfort that marches by the side of growing wisdom; such as strained nerves, and an aching brain. If it be the heart that aches, chafing against the bars and boundaries of knowledge, or envious of another's fame, the fault is not in our science, but in ourselves. Wisdom is better than pearls, and rubies, and diamonds. Humboldt was richer than Rothschild; and more of a king even than Frederick William the Fourth, his bosom friend. The instinct of the highest genius is always practical.

As for our affections, the question is often asked, whether they bring us most of pleasure, or most of pain. Pain is, perhaps, the intenser experience of the two. But who that has ever thrilled at the touch of the diviner ecstasies of life, would refuse the risk of its agonies? Who that has suffered most, would give up his joys to escape his sorrows? These finer sympathies witness for finer and finer possibilities of living. Suffering suggests service, and enriches it.

The best off are yet to be named. Obscurest persons, for whom there seems to be hardly any place in the world, who can only pray, and trust, and keep their lives clean, will be envied by and by, when this world has passed away, and only character survives. Others also choose the good part, who might have chosen

[1] Eccl. i. 18.

something else; the rich and prosperous, honored, refined, and cultured, who learn of Christ to be pure, patient, kind, and humble, looking not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

The hidden life is a great treasure. Fortune, rank, genius, are nothing to it. And character is light. We set it up on high, in towers, on rugged coasts. But a candle in some cottage window may also keep a ship from going on the rocks.

It is plain that the highest and best sense of possession carries along with it the sense also of stewardship and trust. Hoarded treasures invite moth and rust. Use measures worth. There is no luxury to be compared with that of giving. God knows no other. It is one of His exclusive prerogatives; He only, giving what is absolutely His. But He does what He can to make us partakers in this blessedness, by giving us the means and opportunities of giving too; His almoners. Real giving, which asks for nothing, not even gratitude, in return, is not impossible, but is very rare, and very fine.

In regard to property, it is simply the verdict of history since the world began, that men consume what they use, and keep only what they give away. We feed the hungry, clothe the naked, house the homeless, nurse the sick, and get our reward at once, with banquet, robe, and mansion as of angels. Money spent upon ourselves, may be a millstone about the neck; spent on others, it may give us wings like eagles.

So of knowledge. As mere knowledge, it may fatigue and sadden us. But when we make it the servitor of wisdom, and our wisdom the servitor of men, we

have ascertained its worth. It is a luxury to learn; but the luxury of learning is not to be compared with the luxury of teaching.

To pour light on darkened understandings, to open paths through wild forests of doubt, to bring in bewildered pilgrims, to point the head of the moving column steadily towards the Shining City: these are the tasks that never tire.

So of our affections. Who that ever loved, has yet to learn that the joy of loving is incalculably greater than the joy of being loved?

What mother, fondling her first-born son; what father, watching his only daughter, as she blooms in beauty before him, ever found such joy in the love returned, as in the love bestowed? The crowning gladness of our lives is the gladness we get in giving. Sympathy with the sorrow of another, is the best medicine for any sorrow of our own. The tears we shed for ourselves, are often as bitter as the waters of Sodom; the tears we shed for others are sweet as the dews of Hermon.

And what is our idea of the Gospel? Is it for any one of us the solitary plank, on which he is hoping to float ashore? Or is it the life-boat, busy about the wreck, and we pulling at the oars? Or call it the bounty that succors want. Are we only its pensioners? Or also, and equally, its stewards? And our neighbor, who is he? We meet him daily on the street. Perhaps he rolls and riots in wealth, forgetting the God that made him. Perhaps he crawls away at night into some garret or cellar, reeking with a shame more foul to angels than its filth to us. He treads the western prai-

rie. He climbs the Rocky Mountains. He dips his foot in the waves of the Pacific. He tosses his arms in Europe. He sits listless in Asia. The sun is scorching him in Africa. His tent is pitched on the farthest island of the seas. Behold our neighbor, ubiquitous in every climate, in every land. Black or white, bond or free, savage or civilized, still our brother; the same blood in his veins, the same apostasy inherited, the same eternity before him, the same Gospel suited exactly to his needs.

But this Gospel cannot wade the oceans, nor fly upon the winds, nor climb the garret stairs. The hands of living men must carry it, the lips of living men proclaim it. And some must go afar, to darkest and hardest places. Whom shall we send, and who will go for us? Not the aged, whose sun is near its setting. Not the middle-aged, whose sun is crossing the meridian. But the young and strong; our brightest sons, and our fairest daughters. "Had I been there with my brave Franks," said Clovis, when he heard the story of the Redeemer's crucifixion, "I would have avenged His wrongs." Rough, but ready. Not every kind of person to every kind of place and work; but place and work, and will and way, for every disciple of us all. Now we sow in tears; and the fields are cold and brown. But by and by we shall see the sheaves, and hear the shoutings.

What is best for individuals, is best also for the organism; and not best only, but indispensable. Some of us are getting tired of Christian Apologetics. The arguments, almost any of them, are good enough for such as believe already. But for the world, waiting to

see whether it shall believe, or not, only one argument avails. That argument is assault and victory. The army which is always attacked, never attacking, will have to haul down its flag some day.

The civilization which thinks it has done enough, and is settling down to enjoy its treasures, has already begun to squander them. The Church which has no missionaries, will come at last to have no ministers. There is peril, as we have seen, in human charity, enfeebling its recipient. Like it, but greater, is the peril of Divine forgiveness. Not what this Gospel has done for you and me in our closets, or even in our families; but what we are helping it to do for others: this settles the question both for us and for it. Not what we get, but only what we give, is any argument for others.

Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another? . . . . The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them.[1]

Verily, the *Lord* has come.

[1] Matt. xi. 3–5.

XV

PETER

PETER

"So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these? He saith unto Him, Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith unto him, Feed My lambs. He saith unto him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me? He saith unto Him, Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith unto him, Feed My sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me? Peter was grieved because He said unto him the third time, Lovest thou Me? And he said unto Him, Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed My sheep."—JOHN xxi. 15–17.

THIS occurred during one of the last interviews between our Lord and His Apostles, and the thrice-repeated question takes us back to that cold and dismal night of the thrice-repeated denial.

Men who feel they can afford to be thus honest after this fashion of the Four Evangelists, must be very sure of their position. Such honesty as theirs, could we suppose it to be their own, and not of Divine inspiration, honesty so transparent, not to say so chivalrous, with so much at stake, is unparalleled. As biographers of Jesus, they had indeed no occasion for reserve or caution. They might prudently have reported the whole of what their Master had ever said or done. There was no mistake to be acknowledged; no weakness to be concealed. But the mistakes and weaknesses

of the personal disciples of Jesus, mistakes and weaknesses so abundant and so discreditable before the miracle of Pentecost, and not wholly ceasing even then, must have pleaded strongly for oblivion.

In this whole catalogue of scandals, with the exception of the betrayal of his Lord by Judas, there is nothing so flagrant as the denial of his Lord by Peter. And yet in all our Christian history, there is no record of a repentance more bitterly sincere, or a recovery more complete and triumphant. It was therefore wise to make it so conspicuous. It was well that no Evangelist should have omitted the story of Peter's shame; it was well that the last of the Evangelists should have reported this final rebuke of Peter's sin. The Church of Christ has now in this recreant but recovered disciple a possession and a power, which she could not afford to lose.

Be it ours to-day, to take fresh notice of this man Peter; his grievous sin; his hearty repentance; and the bearing of it all upon our own individual experience.

I. *First, of the Man.*

Christendom now calls him Peter, or Simon Peter. But when he was circumcised, his father named him simply Simon. Though of Hebrew parentage, his birthplace was in Galilee, the most densely peopled, industrious, and thrifty part of Palestine, at that time predominantly Pagan. He was a native of Bethsaida, a place between two bluffs, on a charming sandy beach, about half a mile north of Capernaum, on the northwestern shore of the Lake of Galilee. Matthew, Mark, and John, more provincial in their notions, call it the

Sea of Galilee. But Luke, who was born, probably, either in Antioch or Troas, important commercial places, and had consequently seen more of the world, calls it more properly a *lake*. It was only twelve miles long, and six miles wide. Then at least eight cities stood upon its margin. Now only two little hamlets are there. But then, as now, its waters were singularly clear, sweet, and cool. And then, as now, those waters swarmed with fish. From this lake Simon and his brother Andrew gained their livelihood. When first brought to our notice in the Gospel narrative, they were perhaps already men of mature years, in business by themselves, since no mention is made of *their* father, while James and John are spoken of as the sons of Zebedee.

These two Bethsaidan fishermen, Simon and Andrew, were both of them, probably, disciples of John the Baptist, that last and greatest of the Hebrew Prophets. Andrew we *know* was one of the Baptist's disciples; and Simon was not a man to be at religious variance, if he could help it, with his kindred. At all events, these two brothers were not divided in their Christian discipleship. They both stood well with the Master. But Simon bore off the palm. Some six months, or thereabouts, before His crucifixion, Christ called him a Rock: Peter, and promised to build His Church upon the faith he had been so forward in avowing. Christ being then in the extreme northern part of Palestine, had asked His disciples whom they thought Him to be. Peter's answer was, that he thought Him to be, not merely the Messiah, but the *Divine* Messiah, and Christ then said, Thou art *Πέτρος*, and on this *πέτρα* of thy

prompt and true confession I will build my Church. He was one of the three, whom our Lord had with Him on the Mount of Transfiguration. And this indicates the rank he held in the esteem of the Master. He had, indeed, no supremacy over others conferred upon him; he was not even our Lord's *favorite* disciple, John was that; but the *precedency* was given him. He was summoned to a sort of leadership; first amongst his *official equals*, but decidedly *the first.* And this because he best represented, in his constitutional impulses and elements of character, those two grand features of Christianity, which best befitted its earlier history: *aggressiveness* and *organization.* It was ordained, that the new religion in the first stadium of its development should be *Petrine:* striking right and left against Judaism and Heathenism in its earliest evangelic fervor; and then fashioning the energetic polity which was to endure for fifteen hundred years, doing its appointed work, till with the Protestant Reformation the *Pauline* era should be ushered in.

Of the incidents which threw light upon Peter's character may be mentioned such as these: His walking upon the sea to meet his Master, in spite of the tossing billows; his ardent avowal of faith in the Divine Messiahship of Jesus, when others hesitated; his mistaken but loving rebuke of the Master, when He spoke of suffering and death as the goal towards which He was tending; his impulsiveness at the final supper, first refusing to let his Lord perform so menial a service as to wash his feet, and then, when he had learned the symbolic meaning of it, rushing to the opposite extreme, and begging that not his feet only, but also his

hands and his head might be washed; his impetuosity in the garden, not waiting for Christ to answer the question put to Him, whether He wanted His disciples to fight, but drawing at once his sword, smiting the high-priest's servant, and cutting off his right ear. Putting these incidents together, his character stands forth in as bold an outline as that of Luther or Cromwell. He was a man of great natural audacity and force; coarse, homely, rugged, stout, tenacious, powerful, of that class of men, not large, who break down old walls, and bring in new ages. And yet a man of variable impulses, and of changeful moods. Under strong excitement, he stood firm as a granite rock. Hence his surname, *Peter*. But the quick heat might be quickly chilled. And then the granite crumbled. The rock became a sand-heap. His judgment could not always be trusted. His feelings would sometimes snatch the bit, and run away with him. So it happened on the Mount of Transfiguration, when he was so beside himself with rapture, that he wanted to pitch tent and stay there indefinitely. "Master," said he, "it is good for us to be here, and let us make three tabernacles, one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: *not knowing what he said.*"[1] His greatest strength was sometimes his greatest weakness. His large, warm heart overmastered him. It was hard for him to be parted from his friends. It was hard for him to go against the wishes and opinions of his associates. Even those with whom he might be casually in contact, had undue power over him; not from lack of positive convictions of his own, but because his great, hungry heart

[1] Luke ix. 33.

craved sympathy and fellowship. He wanted men to think well of him, and feel kindly towards him. *An overweening love of approbation* was his one great weakness. And so he lay, as such men always do, very much at the mercy of his companions and his circumstances. *John's* heart was a lodestone, that pointed always steadily to the pole. *Peter's* heart was a lodestone easily disturbed and shaken. Of physical courage he had no lack. In his rough, plebeian mould, he was the very incarnation of it. It was boiling in his veins. It was stamped upon his brow. It sounded in his tread. But in moral courage, that immeasurably finer and rarer sort, he was sadly deficient.

His personal appearance was doubtless in keeping with his character. *Malalas*, a Byzantine historian of the sixth century, following probably an ancient, and apparently an authentic tradition, has told us how he looked: An old man of tall and massive frame, with stooping shoulders, bald in front, both hair and beard short, curling and gray, with large nose, dark brown eyes, and eyebrows meeting. Sagacious he was, says Malalas, irascible, variable, faint-hearted, speaking and working miracles by the Holy Ghost.

That he was a genuine disciple, profoundly and passionately attached to Christ, cannot be doubted. He had heard the voice crying in the wilderness, and had left his nets by the margin of the sunny lake, to become a fisher of men. It was not at the first summons that he abandoned his worldly calling, and joined himself to the little company that followed the Carpenter of Nazareth. But when he did accept the proffered discipleship, it was like the enlisting of a soldier. He

took the soldier's oath of fidelity, buckled on the harness, took his place beneath the standard, and waited only for the bugle to sound his march. Such was the man.

II. *Let us notice now the sin of Peter.*

It was a motley crowd which accomplished the arrest of Christ in the garden. There were Roman soldiers, under a Roman captain; the Temple Guard, composed of Levites; a company of busy priests; the soldiers and the Levitical Guard, no doubt well armed; having also lanterns and torches, to make sure of their prey; and all led on by Judas. There was no need of all this array. Christ at once stepped forward to meet them, and told them who He was. Surrendering Himself, He begged that His disciples might be permitted to go their way. And they did go their way: all but two of them, and these two as unlike one another as any two men ever were, John and Peter, who pushed on after their Master, close in the track of the soldiers with their uplifted torches, and entered with them into the palace of the high-priest an hour or more after midnight.

This palace, according to the oriental plan, was built around a quadrangular inner court, which was paved with small round stones, and lay open to the sky. Into this court there was an arched passage-way through the front part of the palace, closed next the street by a heavy folding gate, alongside of which was a smaller wicket for single persons, kept by a porter. This passage-way was called the *porch*. And in this open court, as the night-air was damp and chilly (it was

April 7th), a charcoal fire had been kindled, around which the servants and soldiers stood warming themselves. To this group Peter joined himself; this man of brawny frame, and plebeian look, apparently that he might pass himself off as one of the crowd that had apprehended Jesus, while the Master, of whom he was ashamed to be known as a disciple, was undergoing His examination before the high-priest, in an open hall, on the ground-floor, in the rear or on one side of the court. Here was Peter's first slip. His strong heart was sufficiently committed to Christ to be willing to follow Him to the high-priest's palace, and to make him watch eagerly the proceedings going on against Him; but once in the palace, a false shame comes over him, and he takes his place amongst the coarse soldiers clustered about the charcoal fire. He is thus in a false position. That position is itself, in advance of all his words, a denial of his Lord. His rash act in the garden had brought him into trouble. He was afraid of what might come of it. It is noteworthy that the synoptical Gospels, all written before Peter's death, are careful not to say who struck Malchus. John, writing some twelve or thirteen years after Peter's death, tells us who it was. As they stood there over the fire, servants, soldiers, and Peter, all mixed up together, the damsel that kept the door, already knowing John to be one of Christ's disciples, looked up into Peter's face, and inquired, "Art not thou also one of this man's disciples?" It was an unexpected challenge. But John stood near by, to be sure not as much compromised and imperilled as he was; but known as a disciple. And yet that sudden question of the damsel shook Peter's manhood all out

of him. "Art not *thou also* one of this man's disciples?" Thou, as well as John there? "I am not," he answered. It was all done in a moment. Quick as lightning was the cowardly answer; and quick as lightning the remorse that followed it. He could not bear the light shining upon his guilty face; could not bear the clear, calm eye of his brother disciple, looking strangely at him; and so he drew away from the fire, and slunk back into the porch. Presently he heard the cock crow.[1] Standing there in the shade of the arch, his massive and solid frame and iron brow, belied and belittled, his self-possession all gone, and not knowing what to do with himself, another maid-servant came up to him, and repeated the question, "Art not thou also one of His disciples?"[2] And again the giant stammered, "I am not." An hour later, he goes back again to the fire, thinking, perhaps, that his falsehood had been believed, and that he would not again be troubled. But a man of his stature and bearing is easily marked and remembered. It is a relative of Malchus who besets him, "Did not I see thee in the garden with Him?"[3] And so it passed around, one saying, Surely thou also art one of them; and another adding, Thou art a Galilean, for thy speech betrayeth thee. And so they tortured the poor man; John, the avowed disciple, remaining all the while unchallenged and undisturbed. Enraged and mortified, he could bear it no longer; but breaking over the bounds, he began to curse and to swear, saying, "I know not the man." And immediately the cock crew for the second time.

[1] Mark xiv. 68. [2] Mark xiv. 68. [3] John xviii. 26.

The light was now breaking in the east, over the top of Olivet.

Such was the sin of Peter. There was really no excuse for it. He was in no personal danger. It was only the man of Nazareth, not his little handful of followers, that the Jewish Sanhedrim were hunting down. It was only a momentary contempt that Peter, or any other disciple, had any reason to fear; contempt, too, from servants and soldiers, who would think lightly enough of the sheep, if only the shepherd was smitten. Nobody cared for Peter. He was only a rude Galilean adherent of the agitating impostor whose race was run. Peter's denial of Christ was therefore most ignoble and cowardly.

The paltry desire of standing well in the estimation of those who happened to be about him, menials as they were, had caused him to break fellowship with John, and prove false to Him who was just ready to be offered. Christ had washed his feet at the Supper, and had prayed for him in the garden; while he himself in hot blood had played his part like a true knight, not counting the odds against him. "If I should die with Thee," said he at the Supper, "I will not deny Thee in anywise." And here he was, turning pale when a damsel questioned him, and denying his blessed Master with such oaths as he had once used on board the fishing-boats of Galilee. Miserable man! It makes us blush to think of him; so brave in meeting swords and clubs, so cowardly in meeting sneers.

And yet, let us be just to Peter, even in his disgrace. Compared with Judas, how wide the difference between them. Judas was a cold-hearted, selfish,

scheming politician, bent on the emoluments of place and power.

> Of furtive mien, and scowling eye,
> Of hair that red and tufted fell.

Whether it was money or power for which he cared the most, he was at any rate a thief, embezzling the common fund of the little band of disciples; and betraying from time to time the essentially mean and mercenary spirit of his life; till at last, in despair of using his Master for his own advantage, he betrayed Him to His foes.

But the current of Peter's discipleship had been, for the most part, clear and strong. It was not his nature to be selfish and treacherous. It was only his one weakness, this morbid thirst for the good opinion of men—which in an evil hour falling suddenly upon him, hurled him headlong into sin. He fell, indeed; but like "a just man" who, though he falleth "seven times," shall rise again;[1] while Judas went down like Lucifer, to rise no more.

III. Let us next notice his repentance.

This last profane denial of his Master took place, as we have seen, where the first one did, near the fire in the open court. Christ Himself heard this denial, and the shocking oath that sealed it; for He stood in the Hall, where He could look out upon the group gathered about the fire. And He heard, too, what Peter did, the crowing of the cock, which announced at once the breaking day, and the broken man. "And," says Luke,[2]

[1] Prov. xxiv. 16. [2] xxii. 61.

"the Lord turned and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice. And Peter went out and wept bitterly." "And when he *thought thereon*," says one version of another Evangelist, "he wept."[1]

The reproving look of Christ, standing meek among His buffeters, and soon to start for Calvary, was too much for the false and recreant disciple. His old memories of Christ came back upon him like a mighty swelling tide; and rushing out, through the porch, into the gray twilight of the morning, the fountains burst open within him, and he was buried in a flood of tears. "He wept *bitterly*," they tell us; and we may well believe it, for he was at heart a good, true, brave man, and when he came to himself, he despised and abhorred himself for the momentary weakness which had allowed him so basely to deny his Lord. What his thoughts were, we may partly conjecture, but not describe. The whole past, no doubt, flowed back upon him. The three years he had spent with Christ, night and day, journeying with Him on His errands of untiring mercy, as by a sudden flash, were all present in his quickened memory. The wisdom of Christ in teaching; His sublimity in prayer; His constancy in labor; His meekness in bearing evil; and, above all, that tenderness which treated a whole guilty race like children; smote him with anguish, as with a stunning blow.

And then he thought of all Christ had been to *him;* how Christ had put especial honor upon him; calling him a rock; permitting him to behold His glory upon

[1] Mark xiv. 72.

the mountain; and setting, as it were, His mark upon him, as the one best fitted, by his daring temper, to be the leader of His militant Church. And he remembered, too, no doubt, all that which he had promised to be to Christ; the many brave words he had spoken; and, crowning all, that last saying of his at the Sacred Supper, amid the very shadows of coming trials, "Lord, I am ready to go with Thee, both into prison and to death." [1]

And now this miserable issue. He and Judas linked together in remediless disgrace. Judas bought with silver; and he himself overpowered and broken by a sneer. And before him stood the blessed Being, whose name he had cast out of his cowardly bosom coupled with a vulgar oath. And what was severest of all, no anger darkened the Saviour's brow; only meekness sat there, mingled with the deepest grief; and, brooding over all, the heavy shadow of His hastening agony; His temples soon to be pierced by thorns; and His tender feet set to climbing the long and dolorous ascent to Calvary. Through all of which, there beamed on Peter this one mild, rebuking look. Judas might have borne it; or been driven by it to despair and suicide. But Peter, never. For he had loved Christ; drawn towards Him from the moment he had learned to know Him as "the Lamb of God." He had stood with Him on the Mount, and beheld His glory. He had walked with Him on the tossing sea. He had reclined with Him at the communion of His body and His blood. He had fought for Him in the garden, his prompt blade flashing for Him in the torch-light. He had fol-

[1] Luke xxii. 33.

lowed Him through the silent streets of hostile Jerusalem to the place of trial. And now, shall this one insane and cowardly denial erase and ruin all? No, no, sighs Peter, I have fallen; but I will rise again. I have basely denied my Lord; but I will follow Him to His crucifixion; I will watch His grave; I will hail His rising; and then, till death release me, will I do and suffer in His cause.

Such was the repentance. And do you ask me if it availed? Seek your answer in his life. Three times did Christ try him with the question, "Lovest thou Me?" since it was thrice that he had denied Him. And thrice did he answer, "Thou knowest that I love Thee." Meekly did he receive the delicately implied rebuke; and, till his dying hour, Christ had no warmer heart to love Him, no bolder hand to serve Him. The rugged and exceedingly manly and vigorous traits of his original character, it is true, remained. It is indeed an Apostle that appears before us in his laborious and daring life, but the Apostle *Peter*, restless as the wind, but, when braced to it by some grand excitement, a granite man, as solid as a rock. It was he that marshalled the disciples after the Ascension to elect a successor to Judas.[1] The Sanhedrim arraign him for preaching Christ, and he defies their wrath by telling them that he, for his part, shall obey God, and keep on preaching. Ananias and Sapphira tempt God, by lying to the Holy Spirit, and, at the motion of His stern finger, they are smitten motionless in death. Simon Magus would buy the power of working miracles, and his answer is, "thy money perish with thee." Even

[1] Acts i. 15.

when imprisoned, the Almighty Power of God seems waiting upon him as its cherished minister, and the prison doors fly open to let him out.

Through all these scenes, he strides before us, as with an iron tread. He smites as with a mailed hand.

Only once in all his career, as reported in the Scriptures, does his old weakness come back upon him. In Antioch he withdrew, they tell us, from familiar intercourse with his Gentile brethren, through dread of the censures of his Jewish brethren; and that, too, after having himself led the way in breaking down the middle wall of partition. He thought so much of the good opinion of men that it was hard for him to go against their wishes. For which the Apostle Paul rebuked him sharply. "I withstood him to the face," said Paul, "because he was to be blamed."[1]

Do you say, you are sorry that he erred that once? It was nature, we reply, the old nature of the ambitious and impulsive Peter, not yet fully conquered by grace. And so his character stands before us in proportions that do not appall and mock us as something quite miraculous and above our reach. While we stand in awe of him as an Apostle, we are able to embrace him as a man, and walk on after him towards Heaven. Nay, our interest in him is altogether peculiar. Majestic in his original endowments, we admire him. Inexcusable in his fall, we pity him. Elastic and fearless in his subsequent career, we accept it as a full and glorious atonement for every slip and every error of his life. If he was cowardly in the courtyard of Caiaphas, he made up for it by being a hero at his crucifixion, when he

[1] Gal. ii. 11.

asked his tormentors to nail him to the cross with his feet turned upwards into Heaven. Especially glad are we that so much notice was taken of him after his repentance. Mark this one circumstance. On the morning of our Lord's resurrection, there stood an angel by the empty sepulchre, to proclaim to all comers the glorious fact. And his words were, "Go tell His disciples and *Peter*."[1]

IV. The practical bearing of our subject is direct and obvious.

It might not be quite right theologically, to thank God for Peter's sin. But since he did sin, we certainly ought to be very thankful for the record of it. Had Judas alone offended, afterwards perishing by his own hands, and sinking to his own place, Christians, once sinning, might well grow desperate. Had Peter stood, as John did, unshaken and unsullied, our hard struggle with manifold infirmities would be far harder than it is.

But now we have a sinning Peter before us; an Apostle grievously sinning, but grandly recovered. And while we blush to look upon him, there is comfort in the sight. It is true, he denied his Master, disgraced himself, and brought great scandal upon the Church; but he quickly repented and nobly repaired the mischief he had done; reckoning by thousands the trophies of grace which he was permitted to gather in, and making full proof of the sincerity of his faith, by adding to it the testimony of his martyred life. I know it is urged by some, that Peter was no true Christian

[1] Mark xvi. 7.

till after the shameful occurrence referred to in our text. But the words of Christ Himself to Peter seem sufficiently explicit and decisive of the point at issue. "Satan," said our Lord to the disciple, "hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee that thy *faith* fail not."[1] He must have been, therefore, a child of faith. *That thy faith fail not; desert thee not.* Faith then was something which he had. And though it be added, "when thou art *converted* strengthen thy brethren," the word *converted* is used not in its absolute, but in a modified sense. When thou art recovered to thy loyalty, when thou hast got the better of this sin, strengthen thy brethren.

With this understanding of the matter, it is plain—

First, that a Christian may sin.

And secondly, that sin will not be a habit with him.

Perfectionists tell us that Christians can commit no sin, quoting the text, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin because he is born of God."[2] And men of the world are tempted to say that there is no essential difference between man and man; but that we are all sinners together and alike.

But these are both of them extremes of statement. The truth is that a Christian may sin; as Noah sinned, as David sinned, as Solomon sinned, as Peter sinned. While it is equally true, that sin, as the ruling power of the soul, its law, its habit, its delight, is overborne and conquered.

To say all in a word, our Christian life is a battle,

[1] Luke xxii. 31. [2] 1 John iii. 9.

and not a victory. Light and darkness are the antagonistic forces. In the unregenerated heart there is only darkness; and with the darkness, peace. But into the renewed heart the light has darted, and the war begins.

Be encouraged, then, my feeble, imperfect, wavering brother, *not* indeed to sin, nor yet to think lightly of sin; but if you *have* sinned, to go and sin no more. Remorse belongs to Judas. Penitence to Peter. Penitence, and a better life. Nor be surprised, should Christ ask you thrice over if you love Him; seeming to distrust you. And shrink from no trial and no labor, to which the Providence of God may call you.

John, we know, lived almost to the end of the century, and then died quietly in his bed at Ephesus: a gentle and fitting termination of a gentle and constant life.

But for an impulsive and rugged nature like that of Peter, it was equally fitting that the stormy day should have a stormy end. Not martyrdom alone, but martyrdom of the roughest character, awaited him. But forewarned, he was this time forearmed. Clement of Alexandria hands down to us the tradition, that his wife was led first to martyrdom, as if to shake his courage; but he called her by name, and bade her "remember the Lord."

And then he took his turn, in the Circus of Caligula, at the foot of the Vatican. Only one thing he hoped, that he might not falter. Only one favor he asked, that he might be crucified head downwards, since he would not accept the honor of too closely resembling his Master.

So by great doings, and by great sufferings, must those who have sinned like Peter be prepared to vindicate their Christian calling. The price is great; but so also is the prize. Martyrdom it may be, but just above the clouds a shining crown.

XVI

CHARGE TO AN EVANGELIST

CHARGE TO AN EVANGELIST[1]

My dear Brother:—

The ecclesiastical body, by whose authority and in whose name we act, have now ordained you to be a preaching elder, or presbyter. No other kind of ordained *preacher* is known to our polity. You are a presbyter, ordained to discharge the office of a presbyter; no less, no more. But with this distinctive characteristic, that in the performance of official duty, you are to have no local charge. And this makes you an *Evangelist;* who is simply an ordained minister of the Gospel, in word and sacraments, without the particular and permanent care of souls. As such it is now my duty to address you, laying upon your conscience the obligations which are dictated by the very genius of the office you have thus assumed.

Your office is not precisely the same as that of the New-Testament Evangelists; and yet resembles it. Philip, Timothy, Titus, and others, were itinerant missionaries, sent to labor primarily amongst unevangelized communities and nations. You are not going to the heathen, nor to unbelieving Jews, nor even beyond the

[1] Written for the ordination of the Rev. Edward P. Hammond, as an Evangelist, at the Thirteenth Street Church, New York, January 3, 1863. Dr. Mark Hopkins preached the sermon on this occasion.

boundaries of Christian privilege in a Christian land. But you are to labor amongst our established churches, by the side of their chosen pastors, building thus of necessity upon other men's foundations.

The New-Testament Evangelists rendered also this sort of service; but it was secondary. With you it is the whole. The relationship of your office to that of the settled ministry, is therefore a point of the first importance for you to consider.

The work of the ministry, in its completeness, is a large and exceedingly diversified work. Conversion is only its root. Its trunk and top are all the virtues and all the graces within the compass of the ripest possible Christian culture. From repentance and faith, which are merely rudimental, the believing soul is to be carried onwards and upwards in a spiritual growth, as manifold and opulent as human nature itself will bear. Baptism, which ends the specific service of the evangelist, is only the beginning of a career, the proper guidance of which is a stupendous responsibility. There is a Christian life to be unfolded in the atmosphere of a Christian civilization. And wisely to direct this unfolding, leading on the Church to discern and accept its whole duty, from year to year, from generation to generation, and from crisis to crisis in the world's affairs, is a task, in the execution of which no amount of native talent, no amount of scholarly acquirement, and no ordinary amount of Divine grace, can be reckoned superfluous. All that any man may have of sanctified purpose, of athletic intellect, of various and solid learning, of alert sagacity, of eloquent address, all, and more than all, is demanded in this great work. There is not

a science, nor an art, nor an accomplishment, known amongst men, which may not be laid under contribution; nay, which *must* not be laid under contribution, if the Gospel is ever to subdue all things to itself, if the life of Christ is ever to be reproduced in the life of the race. The enlistment and mustering in of the host of the Lord's anointed, must be followed up by the severities of a protracted and patient discipline, or else there will be no army marching to victory. And this is the work of the settled ministry; requiring, because it *is* settled, and not itinerant, the utmost diligence in study, exhaustless fertility of invention, and the widest possible range of thought, of sympathy, and of service.

Your field is narrower than this; your responsibility restricted and initial, not comprehensive and final. You are a recruiting officer for the army of the Lord. Your proper and special vocation is accomplished when the slaves of sin have been released from their fetters, and have enrolled themselves as the servants and soldiers of Christ. That they go on to perfection, that their faith permeate their whole earthly activity, that they bear nobly their part in relation to all the vital problems of their age, may be your parting injunction; it cannot be the chief burden of your ministry. Having once snatched them from their bondage, and brought them to Christ, you are to leave them, in quest of other souls in need of the same deliverance. From this it follows, that the doctrines you have to handle, must be the more outstanding and elementary doctrines of the Gospel.

Repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, are the two great themes which solicit a per-

petual reiteration. Intellectually, this is an easy task, as compared with the breadth and variety of ministration required of the settled pastor. And with the Divine presence and blessing success in it is easy. A constant handling of these supreme topics in the face of fresh, crowded and eager assemblies, will train you to great facility and effectiveness of utterance. If suitably endowed by nature for this rousing and hortatory work, the path of the Evangelist, as he glides from congregation to congregation, is sure to be lined with trophies. Crowds will hang upon his lips, and sobs of penitential grief and shouts of believing ecstasy will be the music of his triumphal progress by day and by night. In your very success, my brother, will be your peril.

First of all, there is danger of spiritual vanity, avenging itself at last in spiritual shallowness and poverty. Elated by the victories of Divine truth, as dispensed by your lips, you will be tempted to overrate yourself and your own attainments. I beg you to heed this warning of a prophet: "Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood. Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of hosts, send among His fat ones leanness; and under His glory He shall kindle a burning like the burning of a fire."[1]

And then, in order to immediate, palpable success, there is danger of being tempted to a use of forms and measures of procedure, which may easily degenerate

[1] Is. x. 15, 16.

into the merest charlatanry. Be on your guard against the fascination of all human arrangements and devices. The less there is of visible machinery, the better. The sword of the Spirit, in its unembarrassed nakedness, has an edge which no art of man can improve. Your proper business is simply to preach the truth as it is in Jesus; not to organize and engineer its victories. And you must not make undue account of success, thereby exposing yourself to the temptation of *seeking* success, if not in one way, then in some other. Beware of so coveting success, even in this matter of saving souls, as to be willing to compel it by any other means than the might of Divine truth. God's word, not yours, nor any ingenuity of yours, is the fire, and the hammer that shivers the flinty rock.

And then again, there is danger of your not properly co-working with the settled ministry. The faithful, sober pastor, long in the harness, worn by the wide diversity of his engagements, chilled, perhaps, by years of small success in his ministrations, will, doubtless, have something to learn, and which he will gladly learn, of your directness, simplicity, and fervor in urging men to repentance. And, be sure, if a pastor invites you to his pulpit, he does it in the hope of spiritual quickening both for his people and for himself. See to it that you never abuse that trust. Never allow yourself to preach in any Christian pulpit, as though you supposed the Gospel had never before been preached there. But let your work join itself on to the work of the pastor in other months and in other years. Thus will your present, more concentrated and urgent assaults against the battlements of sin, be reinforced by

all the instructions and warnings of a patient and prayerful past. Thus will you and he together garner with shoutings the long-ripening harvest of renovated souls. Do not exalt your office above that of the settled pastor. It is not above it. It is below it rather; below it, as everything merely rudimental and introductory, is below the completeness which it heralds.

Against these three perils, I warn you to be on your guard. I will not enlarge upon them. It were enough, perhaps, to have named them.

But passing by whatever is specific and special pertaining to this office of an Evangelist, it remains for me to remind you that by far the most important feature of this office is that which it has in common with the settled ministry of the word. You are a minister of Christ, and as such, an ambassador from God to men. Let this one thought possess your soul, and reign in it to the subversion and expulsion of every other. You are not a lecturer on any science, even that of theology. You are not a cultured orator for the entertainment of crowded assemblies. But you are God's ambassador to His rebellious subjects. This is a sublime conception of the Christian ministry, and, if entertained as it should be, will be sure to dwarf and shrivel if not utterly eradicate all merely professional ambition and solicitude. In the pulpit think never of yourself, but only of God and the souls of men. And then speak as God Himself shall give you utterance.

Earthly ambassadors have not only their formal written instructions, but they carry with them also verbal hints and suggestions from the authority that sends them. They carry also their own knowledge of the

nation and the institutions which they represent. Thus their written instructions are supplemented. And as unlooked-for emergencies arise, much is left, and may be safely left, to their individual judgment and discretion. Not so with you as the ambassador of God. You represent an upper Kingdom of light, which you have never seen. You have to deal with matters which are known to us, and can be known, only by the special revelations of the Spirit.

The embassy you execute, is the embassy of the Book. Your written instructions are the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible. There is no supplement of Catholic tradition; no reserved privilege and discretion of reason; but only this written word, the wisdom of God and the power of God to the salvation of every believing soul.

It may sound strangely, but I must say it, the great weakness of the ministry in our day, comes from its neglect of the Bible. It is not half enough studied, pondered over, prayed over. Our texts are too often only mottoes. Our sermons are not saturated, as they should be, with the Scriptures. What we need is vastly more of Bible truth, in the Bible forms.

My brother, be a man of this one great Book. Plunge your intellect into its depths. Send your emotions up into its heights. Let your preaching come out of it, as at Horeb waters gushed from the smitten rock.

So shall you be God's ambassador, speaking only God's word. And so shall you save both yourself and them that hear you.

XVII

CHARGE TO A PASTOR

CHARGE TO A PASTOR

"Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine."—1 TIMOTHY iv. 16.

THERE is a great plenty of texts suitable for an ordination sermon, but only one that I now think of which suggests all the essential points of an ordination charge. This occurs in the First Epistle of Paul to Timothy: "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine."[1] Or, as the Revisers have it: "Take heed to thyself, and to thy teaching." This covers the whole ground.

Timothy had been then some ten years already a Presbyter and Evangelist. You, my dear young brother and pupil, are on the threshold of your office. Stamp now this one sentence into your memory, as a perpetual watchword down along the coming years: "*Take heed to thyself, and to thy teaching.*"

I. Take heed to *thyself:* body, soul, and spirit. In philosophy, you probably prefer the Greek, which is also the Pauline, trichotomy of body, soul, and spirit, to the Latin dichotomy of body and soul. Practically, it makes no difference, if only you take an intelligent and proper care of the body. Intelligent, as against all

[1] 1 Tim. iv. 16.

quackeries of food, of medicine, or of gymnastics. Proper, as not being excessive. A certain physical unconsciousness is undoubtedly the highest type of physical condition. Do not study medicine on your own account. Even physicians would rather not, and had better not, prescribe for themselves. Of all kinds of work, brain-work is probably the most conducive to health and longevity. It is not so much work as worry that breaks men down. Worn-out students are seldom worn out by mere study.

Modern science has discovered nearly seventy elementary substances. I recommend to you a familiar acquaintance with the ancient four: fire, air, earth, and water. Give your eyes good light, your lungs good air, your feet a good chance at the ground, with good water in abundance for the whole body, outside and inside. The "bodily exercise"[1] spoken of by Paul as not amounting to much, was probably the asceticism which Timothy appears to have been just a little inclined to.

Be ungrudgingly social in your habits. Cultivate a cheerful, kindly, generous temper. Never mind the parish boundaries. Make as many friends as you can. And never make an enemy, if you can help it without being a coward. Rudeness, which you might very justly resent, is frequently so utterly childish and clownish as not to be worth resenting.

Learn to study, if you have not already learned how. There is a world of difference between hard study and sharp study. The former may be a weariness all round

[1] 1 Tim. iv. 8.

—to your congregation, as well as to yourself. Without sharp study, you must not expect to hold your own.

Character is a great word, one of the greatest. Cultivate character, real character. Obliterate the line so often drawn between *out* of sight and *in* sight. What you think it well to *seem* to be, that *be*. You cannot be too good a man. And, for one, I do not hesitate to say that something is due to *professional* character. In the last analysis, in the ultimate judgment, we are, of course, all measured by one and the same standard. In the sight of God and angels, what is really not morally right for a clergyman is not morally right for anybody. And yet a clergyman should never give himself the benefit of a doubt. Things that are not altogether or exactly wrong, may yet be unseemly and improper. It should be the pleasure of a clergyman, and his instinct, to be irreproachable. He represents a fine, high, heroic regimen of life, a kingdom not of this world; and he cannot afford to forget the dignity of his calling. It is a bad sign for a clergyman to be thinking and talking too much about his "rights." If he insists upon all his rights, he is in danger of neglecting some of his duties. He had better learn to say with Paul, "All things are lawful for me; but not all things are expedient."[1]

II. Take heed to thy *teaching*. The Greek here is διδαχή, the *act*, rather than the *matter*, or *substance*, of teaching. The reference is not to a sharply defined dogmatic system, expressed in Creed or Catechism. This you must have, to be sure, or you will come to

[1] 1 Cor. vi. 12.

grief. A healthy, vigorous human body presupposes a skeleton of bone and cartilage well articulated from head to foot. But the skeleton is inside. You are not ordained to a theological professorship, but to popular teaching.

And by teaching is meant something more than is said on Sunday in the pulpit. In the large city congregations, preaching, as commonly understood, is about all that one man can do. Much fruitful pastoral work is out of the question. But in the country it is otherwise; and must be otherwise more and more, if churches and congregations grow. The time has already come when Chrysostoms are scarce; and Providence is willing to have it so. Congregations will have to be gathered, man by man, family by family. This, in my judgment, is now the paramount concern. The young men who go out from our seminaries must go as missionaries, trained to the work of dealing with men, one by one.

How to handle Divine Truth is, accordingly, a great matter. First of all, one must really be master of it, master of it in detail, master of it in its relations, and master of it for himself.

Beware of dogmatic theology. Do not avoid it. Do not speak lightly of it. Do not think lightly of it. But *beware* of it. I sometimes hear Trinitarian sermons that tempt me to Sabellianism. And I sometimes hear Calvinistic sermons that tempt me to Arminianism. Know your catechism, but preach the Gospel.

Beware also of apologetic theology. Be not ignorant of the assaults, ancient and modern; and master the defences. But if you really believe in Jesus of Naza-

reth, and in His kingdom, show the confidence of a believer. Put a plume in your cap, and learn trumpet tones, and spur your charger on ahead of the charging column.

Beware even of historic theology, if tempted to imagine that history has ceased. Historic theology is sometimes latitudinarian, treating all formulas alike. Sometimes it would arrest discussion, compiling and comparing only the things which have been already said. Time is trinal: past, present, and future. There are great matters now before us, in regard to which the last words have by no means been spoken.

Emphasize Biblical theology. We are only just now beginning to appreciate the importance of it, or to understand its scope. It is the grandest thing I see in the horizon anywhere all around us. What does the Bible teach—what exactly? What did God, through His Prophets, say to the old Hebrew people? What did Christ and His Apostles say in Palestine, in Asia Minor, in Greece, in Italy? Ascertain and then interpret the utterances. This is the path and this is the sign by which to conquer.

Emphasize practical religion. Christianity is, of course, not a mere speculative belief about God and man. Nor yet merely a provision of grace for eternity; but provision for earth and time. For a large proportion of the human race, during centuries of history, this globe has been a dreadful theatre of lust and violence, of war and want and woe. Set yourself to determine exactly what is required in order to a proper Christian civilization. And then do your best right here to realize it.

I envy you, my brother, the years you may hope to live and labor. As disciples of Jesus, standing up for Him in these last decades of the nineteenth century, the worst may not quite yet have befallen us. But the better times are not very far ahead. The Church is stripping for the fight. Some things, once deemed essential, have become indifferent. Men who really know the Lord are beginning to know one another. The Folds are many; but the Shepherd is one, and the Flock is one.[1] And the whole earth shall be its pasture by and by.

[1] John x. 16.

XVIII

SALVATION PREACHED

SALVATION PREACHED

"How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent?"—ROMANS x. 14, 15.

THESE four questions are like the links of an iron chain. It matters little whose questions they were: whether of some imagined objector, disputing Paul's doctrine of justification by faith alone, or of Paul himself. Salvation, he had said, could be had for the asking: "For whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved." And the four questions answer themselves. There can, of course, be no asking without believing; no believing without hearing; no hearing without preaching; and no preaching without sending. Three points are thus emphasized.

I. Salvation by Grace.

We all hope to be saved. To be sure, we do not, most of us, greatly concern ourselves about it practically when we are busy, flushed and prosperous. But in the sober pauses of life sometimes, in pensive moods, in weariness or want, in trouble, in disgust, in sorrow or in sickness, or, perhaps in some sudden peril, we wake up to a painful sense of the invisible realities.

Life, that weighed so heavily, becomes a cloud, or a vapor. The curtains drop, the walls of granite turn to crystal, and the soul is smitten through and through with a light like that of seven days. Then, as in a flash that fills the firmament, we see God, and see ourselves. I shall waste no words on *what* we see; you and I know very well what it is. We are consciously out of harmony with God, and would get away from Him, utterly and forever, if we could. But that is out of the question. We are not blind. We cannot forget. And suicide, the suicide of the soul, is impossible. If it were only for a hundred or two of years that we must live, we might brave the agony. But this ocean of eternity has no horizon. No bells are struck, as the ship sails on and on. A thousand years, and still no tick of the clock is heard.

Let there be now no shallow talk about this tremendous business of moral law. Once violated, no matter to what extent, great or little, self-impeachment begins, and continues. This self-impeachment is in reality, and in its last analysis, Divine impeachment. And no human being has ever escaped it, or ever will. We all know it of one another. We all confess it of ourselves. And did any man ever yet forgive himself? Did you ever? Try it, sometime.

Can *God* forgive? This is the great, sad, tragic question of the ages. Plato says He cannot. Paul says He can. Unless He can, we are lost; you and I, and everybody. Salvation cannot be of merit for anybody that you or I have ever known. It must be of grace, if grace be possible: there is no other way.

And there is this way: an old way, an eternal way,

prepared and opened far back behind all time, when the Lamb was slain. This takes us back into mysterious and awful depths. But revelation leads the way. Surely we narrow God, unless we think of Him as Triune. Surely we slander God, unless we make atonement as much the work of the Father and the Spirit, as of the Son. It was not especially the Son, it was God, who "so loved the world." It is God, the Triune God, who loved and pitied and bore the sin of the world, and lives and pities and carries the burden still. "In all their affliction He was afflicted."[1] Whoever believes this, repenting of his sin, hating it, renouncing it, is saved already.

Such men there were before Christ ever came into the world: men like Seth, Enoch, Melchizedek, Abraham: men like Socrates, perhaps; not sinless, there have been no such, but thoughtful of God, humble, honest, penitent, reverential, afraid of being and doing wrong, and afraid of nothing else; Christians before Christ, just as in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries there were Reformers before the Reformation.

You ask me whether there were many such. How should I know? But this I know, if there were five such, there might have been, and there may have been, millions. If one such, God is justified. Anybody might have been, and anybody may be, saved.

And yet, on the other hand, anybody may be lost. The chance of glory is the risk of shame. Anybody may wrong his neighbor, by violence, or fraud, or libel. Anybody may wrong himself, by unbridled appetite, or lust. Anybody may wrong God, without lifting a

[1] Isa. lxiii. 9.

finger or speaking a word. Anybody may wrong everybody, simply by being intensely and supremely selfish and self-willed. How to be square and clean, how to be considerate and generous, how not to be selfish and self-willed; how not to be afraid or ashamed to die: this is the great problem of life. Tell me how to do this, and you tell me how to be saved. Grace tramples down no law. Salvation by grace is through faith, working by love, which, like fire, cleanses the heart and cleanses the life. "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom,"[1] was no cry of selfish fright, or greed of bliss, but of a heart already changed. That Syrian brigand, in the very act of finding and confessing himself a sinner, became a saint. I hope to see him some day. He heads the column of us sinners saved by grace.

The salvation of society, menaced now, menaced always, by human appetite and passions in their disorganizing play, must come by the same road. No one form of government rather than another, no mere selfish ordering of selfish forces, is the thing required. Till society shall have become unselfish, it has not been saved, nor can it be. And to become unselfish, it must learn, not of socialistic reformers, who pronounce unselfishness impossible, but of Him who was unselfishness incarnate. He, the Galilean Peasant, He only supplies at once the lesson, the example, and the assisting grace. More political freedom might, or it might not, be well. Higher wages, all at once, might, or might not, be well. Too much liberty, I should say, is possible; and certainly too much wealth is possible,

[1] Luke xxiii. 42.

with too much luxury. But too much Gospel, too much religion, real religion, too much solidity and grace of character, there can never be

Evangelistic work, I know, is challenged: I am glad it is. Christians are challenged: I am glad they are. It will do no harm. Fire consumes only the dross. If every pious man were only a thoroughly good man! and every thoroughly good man were only fine and chivalric in his goodness! What we want, now and onward, is not Christian cant, but Christian character for wear and tear. We want good sons and daughters; good brothers and sisters; good husbands and wives; good fathers and mothers; good business men, good neighbors and citizens. We know such persons when we see them. And we know they are not trained in beer gardens, or dancing saloons, or infidel lyceums. No doubt there are Christian hypocrites. But so likewise are there hypocrites of another kind: scientific men who pretend to care only for science, but miss no chance of striking at revealed religion; literary men, who profess philanthropy, and practise egotism.

Bringing the matter to a practical test, our three great religious denominations in these United States are the Methodists, the Baptists, and the Presbyterians. And is it not quite certain that if the Methodist average of character, or the Baptist average, or the Presbyterian average were the American average throughout, our imperilled institutions, liberty, life, and property, would all be safer than they are?

But what are you and I doing to make good this average of character? What are we doing for the thousands who seldom or never cross the threshold of a

church? What are we doing for the thousands who will not find their way to the chapels built for them? What are we doing for those who serve us in our homes, in our factories and counting-rooms, in our shops and on our farms, except to pay them their wages? Are we brethren, or not? If not brethren, we and they, whose Father is God—ours or theirs? And on whose side will He be, if ever the line is drawn?

II. This Salvation must be preached.

Christianity is one of the great Book-Religions: of which there are pre-eminently three, Judaism and Mohammedanism being the other two. This word *Book-Religion* means a great deal. It means, first of all, that we have something definite and immutable by which to measure whatever calls itself Christian, holding it to the rule. And this is a matter of vital moment. Everything historic grows and changes: all institutions and systems, of whatever kind, secular or sacred. Judaism changed, so as hardly to be recognized, between the time of David and the time of Herod. Mohammedanism is greatly changed from what it was when it burst in flame from the Arabian peninsula. Christianity itself has changed in passing from ancient to mediæval, from mediæval to modern, times. No matter now what any man, or any sect, or any great communion, or any Council, even though it were ecumenic, or any Creed, even though it were our own, may have said is Christian: what says the Book, this Book of the two Testaments, Old and New? The malediction, with which the Apocalypse concludes, guards, constructively, every other part of the inspired

canon just as well. Cursed be the man that either adds anything to it, or takes anything away. Christianity is all here, in black upon white: every ordinance, every essential doctrine, every rule of life. Turn Christianity into childish parade and pomp of rite and ceremony; turn it into monstrous Papal despotism; turn it into cast-iron theology; turn it into nebulous and hazy mysticism; turn it into what you will: this sturdy Book shall turn it back to the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord's Prayer, and the Golden Rule.

The word *Book-Religion* means also much more than mere organic law, holding things to their pattern. It means that the poor, swearing, shipwrecked sailor, that floats ashore on his chest, if he has in that chest the Bible his mother gave him, and dries its leaves in the sun, and reads the third chapter of John's Gospel, with streaming eyes, and breaking, believing heart, may be saved all alone there on the sandy beach of the desert island. And if he dies there all alone, no ship sailing that way to see his signal of distress, he will go as straight to Heaven as Whitefield himself went from the sermon he preached in Exeter.

And yet Christianity did not start as a volume, but as a voice. Christ Himself probably wrote nothing, not a line. The earliest of the Four Gospels was not written till more than twenty, the latest till at least fifty, more likely sixty, years after the Day of Pentecost. Meanwhile, the Kingdom of Christ had been marching and conquering, north and south, towards the rising and towards the setting sun. Its snow-white banners, chasing the Roman eagles, had outflown those

eagles beyond the Danube, the Euphrates, and the Indus. What wrought that triumph? The foolishness of preaching wrought it. It was the thrilling story of Christ's life and death, from the manger to the cross, from the cross into the sky; what He said to one and another, here and there; what He did for the blind man, what He did for Lazarus; how He prayed for His enemies, how He cared for His mother; the story, now an old one, then a new one, told as sailors tell of escapes from shipwreck, as soldiers tell of escapes from iron tempests of battle.

When we think of it, this is all of the very essence of Christianity itself. Christ is no Confucius, or Socrates, or Solon, but God incarnate. Even the Law thundered from Sinai was not merely "with the sound of a trumpet," but also with the "voice of words," [1] articulate. He that saves us *spake*, and as never man spake. So the sacred message ran, and runs, from lip to lip. It is in the air all the time.

A Bible in every human habitation is something well worth trying to achieve. But I can tell you of something better still. It is Christ Himself, in any one of the humblest of His disciples, casting His shadow on the wall. Breathing men, not breathless books, must carry salvation round the globe. Despise not the little tract. "Coming to Jesus," written by a London clergyman, has saved a great many souls. But there is nothing to rival the human voice. What would Peter the Hermit have accomplished had he stayed in his monastery and from that retreat had issued a printed call to arms, even though he had showered Europe with

[1] Heb. xii. 19.

his circulars? Who cares for circulars? But when that fiery little monk, lean, swarthy, keen-eyed, eloquent, bareheaded, barefooted, girded about the loins with a heavy cord, and mounted on his mule, undertook the tour of Europe, preaching the First Crusade, with tears and groans, smiting his breast, kissing the crucifix, passionately invoking the vengeance of God and man on the ruthless Saracen, all Europe sprang madly to its feet and hurled itself, steel-clad, upon the Orient. So of the Gospel, now and always. It must be in the blood like iron, in the eye like fire, in the voice like a trumpet-call. It must be preached; preached by men who have had it preached to them; preached to sinners by men who have sinned themselves; *by* dying men *to* dying men.

Harlan Page has been worth more to the world than Cotton Mather's famous "Essays to do Good." The story of Payson's death-bed, or the story of Havelock's dying, is worth more to-day than Baxter's "Saints' Rest." The best sermon that was ever preached to me, I did not hear at all, but only saw it and felt it. A friend of mine lay dying, not many months ago. His voice was clear and strong to the very latest syllable almost. Then the light of the eyes went out, and the hands dropped, and the head drooped, and we said one to another, "He is gone." Suddenly the head turned upon the pillow, the hands moved, and light was in the eyes again. Surprise, wonder, adoration, rapture, wave on wave, rolled across that pallid face. It was the beatific vision. Now I know the meaning of that text: "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness." [1]

[1] Ps. xvii. 15.

III. The Preachers must be sent.

Our text does not say by whom, but the context makes it plain enough. God must send them. Some men are preaching, at least they call it preaching, who have not been sent by anybody but themselves. They belong to the synagogue of Satan, some of them certainly. Others are preaching, regularly licensed and ordained thereto, sent only of men. They have no higher call. Whoever preaches to any purpose, is sent of God to do it; not by visions and voices now, as Moses and Aaron were sent, or Elijah and Elisha, or Peter and Paul; but just as truly sent.

Whom God sends to preach, He first converts. And then He kindles in him, beyond the average, what we have been in the habit of calling a love for souls; call it, if you please, enthusiasm, a great, good heart, quick sympathy with men as men, and with the daily wants and ways of men. For the higher places, there must be, of course, the higher gifts, and the higher culture. There was only one Chrysostom; had there been another, Antioch and Constantinople would have liked it better. We shall never get too many preachers of this sort; we shall never get enough. Preachers of this sort are not made; they grow. And yet the better the stock, the better it repays wise husbandry. Pruning is a good thing, and grafting is good. Wild apples nobody wants, when he can get the cultivated. It is absurd to decry study and scholarship. Some men who used to do it, have learned better. Christianity conquered the old Græco-Roman civilization, by absorbing and assimilating all that was really good in it. Modern civilization was born Christian, but can be kept Chris-

tian only by a discipline that masters everything. A Church without trained and intrepid thinkers, is an army without officers.

Preaching is a great art, even though the preaching be very plain and peremptory. Moses thought so, when he said he had a slow tongue, and would rather not take God's message to Pharaoh, though he had it all by heart.[1] Nobody that has never tried it, knows how hard it is to make what we consider only a very ordinary talk or sermon. It requires an accumulated capital of knowledge, of experience and of character. It requires singleness and sacredness of purpose; elevation, and aloofness from what is merely secular, even though it be not sinful; magnanimity and manliness. Lay and clerical are good and useful adjectives, much as they have been abused. The dividing line had better not be obliterated.

And yet in the Apostolic and early Church, which wrought such wonders, preaching was not exclusively an official prerogative. Strictly speaking, there was no order of preachers. The only orders were Apostles, Elders, and Deacons. Afterwards, properly, only two, Elders and Deacons, Bishops not being Apostolic at all. Preaching was only a function. Anybody might preach who had anything to say worth saying. Not till near the close of the fourth century were laymen forbidden to preach.[2] And then the Church had got far along in

[1] Ex. iv. 10.

[2] Fourth Council of Carthage, 398 A.D. Canon 98 (of. 104): "Laicus, præsentibus clericis, nisi ipsis jubentibus, docere non audeat" Harduin's Concilia, i., 984.

the bad way, going farther and farther, till she heard the iron trumpet of Luther.

We all know what danger there is in the old liberty of preaching; what danger of crudeness and wildness. Liberty is always dangerous; liberty of speech and of the press, liberty of voting, even. But not half so dangerous as despotism, with the safety-valve screwed down. It was the military, official instinct in Joshua that would have silenced Eldad and Medad, prophesying, not in the tabernacle, but in the camp. Moses was wiser: "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets."[1]

As I look out over the world calculating the chances, I confess I do not see how Christianity is ever to carry the day, unless the great bulk of our Church membership becomes also a ministry. By this I mean, not merely the passive ministry of character, though that is much, but active personal concern, and direct personal service of some sort, aiming to make others happier, wiser, and better; every believer a witness, every new recruit himself straightway a recruiter.

A Grecian army, with or without leaders, might possibly have stood its ground all the same at Marathon, saving Greece, and saving the civilization of the Occident. But Miltiades alone there, with his handful of officers, would not have stayed for a moment the Persian march on Athens.

For some forty millions of people in these United States we have more than forty thousand official preachers. And yet we call our country only nominally Christian. Observing the same ratio, China, with her four

[1] Num. xi. 29.

hundred millions of people, should have four hundred thousand preachers. What shall be done to put her into the way of having them by and by? What shall be done for the rest of Asia? What shall be done for Africa? Nay, what shall be done for nominally Christian Europe and America? Our common Christian civilization, on both sides of the Atlantic, the growth and heritage of generations, stands challenged to-day and menaced. Property, always jealous of its rights, is now fiercely warned to be mindful of its duties. The sacred bonds of the family are cast like threads of flax into the furnace. Immortality, moral retribution, God Himself, are all denounced and derided as enslaving but idle dreams. And this new barbarism, not out of wild forests as of old, but out of the back streets, the cellars and garrets of crowded cities, is only growing denser and blacker from year to year.

Let us be warned. But let us not be appalled and paralyzed. Jesus of Nazareth disarmed the madman from the tombs of Gerasa by His glance of love. These angry men, gnashing their teeth, rattling their broken chains, are the very men He died for. And all round the globe, too, are the men He died for. But how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent? And if still you ask me, Who are sent? still I answer, Pray tell me, who are *not* sent, if only they be called? And tell me, is it possible for any man to be a Christian himself and be doing nothing to make other men Christians too? Who, if he could, would like to be plodding heavenward in a path only wide enough for one?

XIX

UNTROUBLED FAITH

UNTROUBLED FAITH[1]

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me."—JOHN xiv. 1.

THE story told of the burning of the famous library of Alexandria by order of the Caliph Omar, is probably apocryphal. But what the Caliph is reported to have written to Amru, his general commanding in Egypt, has a grand moral. If those books contradicted the Koran, they were false, and ought to be destroyed. If they agreed with the Koran, they were of no use, and might well be spared. One Book was enough for Mohammedans. So, when Sir Walter Scott lay dying, he said to his son-in-law one day, "Lockhart, read to me." "What book shall it be?" said Lockhart. "Why do you ask? there is but one," said Scott.

Now, if this Book itself were in danger of being destroyed, and I might have only one chapter out of it, I rather think it would be this fourteenth chapter of John's Gospel. Probably no single chapter is read so much. We read it to ourselves when we are all alone, on the land, on the sea, in the solitudes of nature, in the solitudes of personal experience. We read it at the communion-table, catching the very tones which

[1] Written as an ordination sermon, and so used on several occasions. Also delivered in Glasgow, Scotland, April 17, 1885.

made such music nearly nineteen hundred years ago. We read it to the dying, and they are soothed. We read it over the dead, and thank God that they are safe. These are sacred and tender offices. But we narrow the chapter when only such offices are thought of. It was the Speaker Himself who was about to die. His hearers were about to be launched into a life-long service. Their feet were on the threshold of a ministry, whose first and whose last necessity was absolute, child-like faith.

I. *Let not your heart be troubled.* Certainly they *were* troubled. And they had reason to be. Consider the circumstances. It was in what we now call the year of our Lord thirty, Thursday evening, April the sixth. To-morrow there will be a dying cry, the echoes of which are to stay in the air forever. Jerusalem is full of people, Jerusalem and all its suburbs: not thousands of people merely, but tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands. In countless groups, family by family, all over the city, and in tents all around the city, these hundreds of thousands are eating their paschal supper. It is now, we will suppose, not far from nine o'clock. The great round paschal moon is half-way up the sky. On the hill, west of the temple, known as Zion, the upper city of David, Jesus of Nazareth and His twelve apostles have been eating their Paschal supper. It is ended now. Judas has taken the hint, and gone his way towards the snow-white temple, towards the paschal moon; and his cold shadow seems to be lying on the floor. Jesus sees every movement, and hears every footfall of Judas hurrying along the moonlit streets;

knows just where the traitor is going, and just what he will say and do. Jesus sees also His own sad way; down over the Kedron to Gethsemane, after an hour or two; and to-morrow, at nine o'clock, to Calvary; and thence, by that awful plunge appointed for us all, into the unseen world. Only that once did He ever say, "*Little* children,"[1] speaking to His disciples. "Little children, yet a little while I am with you." But only for a little while. I am going far away beyond that paschal moon, beyond the stars. And you will be alone here, sheep without your Shepherd, in a wild pasture, under a stormy sky. Keep close together, love one another, it is all that you can do. But Peter answers, in his quick, headlong way, "I will lay down my life for Thy sake"; I too know how to die. Jesus answers: "The cock shall not crow till thou hast denied Me thrice."[2] Poor Peter! Poor disciples, all of them! Only eleven now; of one heart, to be sure, but that one heart "troubled." Jesus is quick to see and pity. "Let *not* your heart be troubled." Such was the connection. And how gracious the words were!

Years afterwards, so runs the legend, this same Peter, fleeing by night from the city, to escape impending martyrdom, was met by Jesus at the gate. "Lord, whither goest Thou?" inquired the surprised disciple. "I am come to be crucified again," answered the Master. And then the disciple that denied Him once, turned back to play the hero. It was Rome that time.

[1] τεκνία John xiii. 33, instead of τέκνα. Paul uses it once, Gal. iv. 19, and John, in his Epistles, seven times, viz., 1 John ii. 1, 12, 28, iii. 7, 18, iv. 4, v. 21.

[2] John xiii. 37, 38.

The lesson is broader and deeper than it may have seemed to be. History is one endless round of repetitions, of essential repetitions. Generations come and go, names change, the world moves on; but the great types of character are constant, and the things that be are the things that have been, and shall again be. In this sense, apostolic succession never fails. Many times over Judas Iscariot betrays his Lord, and hangs himself. Many times over Peter denies his Lord, and bitterly repents. Many times over the Lord Himself is crucified, and buried, rises and goes away and comes again unseen. It is the same old story always; and always with the old refrain: "Let not your heart be troubled."

To-day, as related to heathen peoples and religions, the Judas Iscariot of Christianity is Christendom itself. At first, Christianity had no Christendom at all behind it; had behind it only the incomparable personality and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. Peter, Paul and John had no Constantine nor Charlemagne nor Henry VIII. to carry. There was then no Christian England, forcing opium on heathen China; no Christian America, driving Chinamen across the continent from San Francisco to New York; no sailors, Greek, Catholic or Protestant, defiling every seaport of every continent and island. If Christendom were only Christian really, how much longer would China probably be Confucian? or Japan Buddhistic? or India Brahmanic? or Turkey Mohammedan? These are painful questions; painful and humiliating. But let not your heart be troubled.

Inside of Christendom I see another betrayal of Christianity, which also is very painful. Wealth in-

creases, comforts and luxuries are multiplied, liberty grows, laws improve, arts and sciences develope, morality advances, the whole life of individuals, families, communities, and nations is lifted, strengthened, and adorned. In short, we behold a Christian civilization, incontestably and immensely superior to any heathen pattern or rival, ancient or modern. By and by this Christian civilization forgets its Christian parentage; or denies it, and claims for itself another pedigree. Clean, cultured, scholarly men analyze and compare the great historic religions, allowing little, if any, pre-eminence to Christianity. Then after a while the conclusion is reached that we really need no religion at all, only science. The end is near. Take your sop, Judas, and begone. As for the eleven, let not their heart be troubled.

Peter's denial of the Lord also repeats itself; is a permanent factor in Christian history. Scandals and offences are sure to come. Good men are tempted, some in one way, some in another: each according to his weakness. The brilliant, the admired, the trusted, set in conspicuous places, natural leaders of men, stumble and fall. Let not your heart be troubled. Peter denied his Master with an oath.

Whole communions apostatize: like the old martyr Churches of the Orient; like the venerable Church of Rome, boasting of its relation to Peter, and like him, thrice denying the Lord, in its secular dominion, its worship of the Virgin and its doctrine of Papal Infallibility. Verily, powers of darkness are busy; and the night is long. But let not your heart be troubled. The morning cometh. Peter repented.

As for what Christ said about going away and coming again, changing the economy from flesh to spirit, from sight to faith, it seems strange to us that His Apostles should have been so staggered by it. What could they be thinking of? Another Rabbinic school like that of Hillel or Shammai? another dynasty like that of the Herods? or another national uprising like that of the Maccabees? Those Apostles, to be sure, were Jews, Galileans, peasants, fishermen. But for three years they had been under marvellous tuition; and we wonder they got so little out of it. The Day of Pentecost had not yet come.

By and by, men will be looking back and wondering at us Christians in these last years of the nineteenth century, that we so poorly understood the Gospel, overlaying it, some of us with ritual, others with dogma. Lament it, my brethren. We have much to be ashamed of. But let not your heart be troubled. More Pentecosts than one have come already. And more are yet to come, with rushing pinions and tongues of flame.

II. *Believe in God.*

Commanded belief implies always the possibility of honest unbelief. Such unbelief has increased greatly of late. Bad men, of course, may be expected to say there is no God. But just now many good men, morally good men, are also saying it, as never before in a hundred years. Partly this new Atheism seems like a reaction against outward authority, and traditional opinions, or against a childish and superstitious theism. Partly it is sheer science, clear-eyed and dispassionate. Science cannot help multiplying the second causes

More and more, things are seen to grow out of, and run into, one another: from mineral to plant, from plant to brute, from brute to man. Within certain limits, evolution is undoubtedly the law. But there remain at least three mysteries which evolution has not explained: the mystery of life, the mystery of self-conscious personality, and the mystery of conscience. Either they were self-existent in the protoplasm or they were created. If created, no matter how far back it was. If self-existent in the protoplasm, then we shall have to worship the protoplasm. In either case, religion, driven out by the door, comes in again by the window.

I have no fear of any very long reign of Atheism. In the poor, apathetic and languid Orient, there may be morality enough to conserve society, with little or no religion, as in China. But not in Europe and America, full of vitality, greedy, rich and restless. With us, irreligion to-day is immorality to-morrow and after that the deluge. In this Occidental world mills of the gods are grinding very fast, as well as very fine.

Much of what passes for belief in God, is mere scholastic assent to the proposition that God exists. Or the attributes most emphasized are those pertaining rather to the Divine essence, such as Unity, Self-existence, Absoluteness, Eternity, Invisibility, and Immutability. What we need is a vivid and besetting sense of the Personality of God, in His Omniscience, Omnipresence, Wisdom, Holiness, Justice, Truth, and Love. He must come very close, and be very real, to us, in our whole experience of life. Right must be what He has told us to do; wrong, what He has told us not to do. Man-

kind must be His offspring; and human history, from first to last, the working out of His own eternal and righteous purposes. Nothing surprises, nothing baffles, nothing disturbs Him. The worst things are overruled for good. Defeat is impossible. One man, with God on his side is the majority that carries the day. "We are but two," said Abu Bakr to Mohammed as they were flying, hunted, from Mecca to Medina. "Nay," answered Mohammed, "we are three; God is with us." And so belief in God is not mere assent, nor mere conviction, but absolute personal trust, submission and service.

You and I know very well what troubles us in thinking of God. Sin makes us afraid of Him. But if He had no hatred of sin, how much worse it would be for us. We might be in the power, by and by, of evil spirits stronger than we are, from whose hideous tyranny and torture we should feel it a mercy to be delivered over to the righteous judgment of a pure and holy God. Where now is the Emperor Tiberius, under whom our Lord was crucified? The Tiberius that used at Capri to hurl the tortured victims of his cruelty down the precipice into the sea? Where now is Nero, that other imperial monster who first persecuted the Christian Church? The Nero that lighted up the gardens of the Vatican with blazing martyrs? And where are the many other monsters of history, to be named or thought of only with a shudder? They are somewhere. And what have they been about all these hundreds of years?

You say you are afraid of God. Awful indeed is that eye which never slumbers, that ear which is never dull,

that hand which is never withdrawn or palsied, that memory which never forgets, that beam of justice which never tips. But what human imagination can picture the horrors of a universe given over to the rioting of evil, unrebuked, unpunished and unrestrained. Thank God for His holiness. Though He slay us, we had better trust in Him.

III. *Believe also in Me.*

In Me, not as a second, rival object of trust, but as God manifest in the flesh, rounded out and historic. Believe in God, as finally and fully revealed in Me. This takes us back into bewildering depths. Sin is a tremendous mystery; but has Divine permission, and so conditions all our knowledge of God. But for sin, we might never have known, in this world, the sublime Triunity of God. The Triunity would have existed all the same; but might never have been revealed, perhaps could not have been revealed. But for sin, we should have caught no such glimpse of this stupendous abyss of the Divine Being and Perfections. But for sin, we should never have known what Love is. Even angels have had to learn it in this way. Triunity, as we have to study it, is God, the whole Godhead, dealing with the problem of moral evil. God the Father creates, rules, and judges. God the Son pities and atones. God the Spirit regenerates and sanctifies. Permitted sin called for redemption; perhaps *required* it, God owing it to Himself, if not to us.

"Believe *also* in Me." The work of atonement is done, was done centuries ago in time, ages ago in eter-

nity.[1] God in Christ now stands pledged to the forgiveness of sin, to the forgiveness of your sins and of mine, their absolute forgiveness, on the single condition of humble and hearty repentance. We may die to-night, intensely conscious of ill-desert, vividly remembering many and many a sin of deed, or word, or wish, or thought; and yet we may die in peace. The mansions are ready for us. The prodigals are welcome. God is Love. God is Christ.

"Believe *also* in Me." Human History is God's Judgment Day. Nations are rising and falling. Civilizations are blooming and fading. Human History is also God's Day of Grace. The kingdom began in an Upper Chamber. A hundred and twenty disciples in Jerusalem, five or six hundred in the whole of Palestine, these were all, and Jesus of Nazareth had been gone ten days. The Christ had gone; but the Spirit came, down-rushing on those waiting heads and hearts, and the Christ had come back again to stay. From then till now the Kingdom has steadily advanced. Three thousand on the Day of Pentecost; half a million when John died at Ephesus, and four hundred millions to-day. At first only a dot upon the map; now whole continents subdued and bannered.

Challenged by the critical spirit of our time, I have tried to study the Four Gospels, the Acts, the Epistles, and the Apocalypse, just as I study the Koran, the

[1] John xvii. 24: "For Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." 1 Pet. i. 19, 20: "But with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ: who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world," etc. Rev. xiii. 8: "Slain from the foundation of the world" [perhaps "written from," etc.].

Vedas, or the Zend-Avesta. The steady progress of Christianity from the beginning until now, substantially gaining all the while, has no parallel in the history of any other religion. The problem demands solution. And only one solution is possible. But for the magnetism of the felt divinity of Christ, Christianity could not have started at all as it did. The Four Gospels could not have been written. Saul of Tarsus could not have been converted. These Four Gospels are magnetic still. Composed in the finest language ever spoken, they carry their divine power into the meanest and poorest of spoken languages. Human depravity is rank and stubborn; but no concession is made to it. The cycles of history have immense diameters; and the march is slow. The shining stars are far apart in the awful spaces. But the throne of God is firm and central, and He that sits upon it was cradled in the Virgin's arms. And He that sits upon it was also cradled in eternity. "Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee."[1] And then remember the covenant: "Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession."[2]

If there be any philosophy of History, its final word is Redemption: God in Christ, reconciling the ages unto Himself. Just a little more Divine pressure on the souls of men, which should come as softly as vernal breezes, and the work might soon be done. Why not this little more? We wonder, and we cry, "How long?" God only knows. We have only to labor and to wait. It is of no concern to Christianity what you

[1] Ps. ii. 7. [2] Ps. ii 8.

and I may say of it, or think of it: but of infinite concern to us. Steadily down the centuries, with ponderous tread, it moves on all the same, over us, trampled in vain resistance, or through us, trophies at once, and partners, of its triumph. It abandoned to its fate the hostile Roman Empire of the West. It added a thousand years to the friendly Roman Empire of the East. It carried mediæval Europe through such centuries of migration and of violence, as would have wrecked any civilization but this of the Galilean Peasant. It stands to-day the old solid bulwark of liberty and order against license and chaos.

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me."

And as for you, my brother, be it as the Master will; the long hard day of toil, or the short hot hour of battle. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me."

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